PREACHING *Out of the* OVERFLOW

STIDGER

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PREACHING OUT OF THE OVERFLOW

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INTRODUCTION

PREACHING means conversation.

"The Sermon on the Mount" was not a sermon in any formal sense. Jesus designated his words there as "these sayings of mine."

The radio is more and more forcing us back to the original meaning of homiletics. Old-fashioned pulpit oratory will not go over the radio. It will "blast" a microphone. The quiet, earnest eloquence of facts is the only oratory which will succeed these days. Science has forced that.

Men who preach to the hearts of people will succeed in reaching their minds. Successful oratory does not make its primary appeal to the minds of men, but to the hearts of men. Facts—yes; and intelligence—but no aloofness of intellectual pride. This separates the preacher from men. It must not be forgotten that of Jesus it was said, "The common people heard him gladly."

It must not be forgotten that the common people heard Jesus gladly because they understood every word that he said. There was no abstract metaphysical background to the preaching of Jesus and no theology to confuse them. His was the direct, forceful, inescapable challenge of a life, a plan, a program, some goals, and a cross. They are as far removed from so-called scholasticism as the North

Star is removed from its reflection in the sea. Too much of our preaching is dulled and dimmed by the shadow of a dead scholasticism.

This book about preaching is the flowering of a quarter of a century of trying it out in a wide variety of churches and cities; a scope of geography which has reached from the Atlantic to the Pacific; in war and peace; in small church and large church; in industrial sections and agricultural sections.

I do not want to call this a book on Homiletics, or the Science of Preaching. Rather I want it to be looked upon as a book of enthusiasm about the business and pleasure of preaching.

These thoughts about preaching I have had in my heart for many years, but the interesting task of talking for a year with a group of students about preaching has brought these ideas into this form.

I am sure that my readers will forgive me for not placing the credits for quotations at the bottom of each page, as is the usual academic tradition; thus focusing the eye and the mind on a star and a credit at the bottom of the page. Instead of that I clear the following pages of stumblingblocks to the eye and proceed to thank the following authors and publishers for brief quotations from their books:

To Edna St. Vincent Millay for the quotation in Chapter I from her book "Renascence," published by Harper and Brothers.

To Dr. James Black, for permission to quote from "The Mystery of Preaching," published by the Fleming H. Revell Company.

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All of the additional Biblical quotations are from the King James Version of the Bible.

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CHAPTER I

PREACHING OUT OF THE OVERFLOW

When I was outlining this first chapter on "Preaching Out of the Overflow," my train was passing through one of the oil fields of Kansas.

On both sides of the track were forests of oil derricks. The heavy odor of oil penetrated the Pullman car. It had a pleasant tang.

As I looked at those oil wells scattered everywhere, I remembered that there are three types of oil wells: dry holes, wells that have to be pumped, and wells that overflow. They overflow out of the abundance that is stored away, down deep in the earth's subconscious self, as it were.

So there are three kinds of preachers and three types of preaching: There is the preaching that corresponds to the dry hole (that type is so proverbial that when we want a perfect figure for dryness we too often say, "as dry as a sermon"). Then there is the type of a preacher who has to pump himself, to strain, to battle and sweat and worry himself, and his family, each week into misery over a sermon. Thirdly, there is the man who preaches out of the overflow.

In "The Mystery of Preaching" Dr. Black says: "A minister is continually giving out each week, even if it be only in 'penny packets'; and there

must be some method of refilling the coffer. Real joy in preaching depends on our having more ideas and suggestions for preaching than we can ever use; and this fine joy, akin to elation, only comes when our minds and our notebooks are crammed full. The best preaching is always the natural overflow of a ripe mind and the expression of a growing experience. A good sermon is never worked up, but worked out."

Too many preacher-libraries, preacher-minds, preacher-lives, and sermons are like Old Mother Hubbard's Cupboard:

> "And when she went there
> The cupboard was bare,
> And so the poor dog had none."

Somewhere I heard of an Eastern proverb which says, "You can only take out of a pot what you have put into it," which is an echo of a more poetical quotation from Milton's "Lycidas":

> "The hungry sheep looked up and were not fed."

All of this is by way of introduction to an outline of the various types of "overflow" out of which a preacher ought to be able to preach.

I. Sermons Come Out of the Ovefrlow of Physical Energy

Bishop Edwin Holt Hughes called my attention a few years ago to the fact that too many preachers go until they are about forty years of age and then

slump. They go like twentieth-century trains, breaking all records for speed and enthusiasm. Then they suddenly drop out of sight and begin the down grade with almost as much speed as they came up the hill.

He attributes that to the fact that they go on their physical energy up to about forty; and then, having depended on that alone, and not having stored up any other mental or spiritual overflow, they have "shot their wad" and are through.

When I say that a man ought to preach out of the overflow of physical energies, I do not mean that he ought to limit his overflow even in youth to that merely. We all know that the physical man, the overflow of physical powers, begins to decline close to forty. Ty Cobb, Jack Dempsey, Tris Speaker, and the other famous athletes are through—are called "old men" in athletics—when they are about forty. That is a clear demonstration that the physical overflow must be backed up by something else. Yet, nevertheless, I put the physical overflow in this chapter as an essential thing.

There is nothing more contagious than a physically prepossessing preacher standing up in a pulpit well-dressed, slim-waisted, broad-shouldered, overflowing with physical energy. That overflow pours itself out into the sickly, pasty, anæmic, sluggish, unfit, the slow-moving, the lethargic lives of the individuals of a congregation and lifts them up, and

out of themselves, into the realms of health and sunshine and hope.

The truly great preachers of all times have been men of overflowing physical energies—with few exceptions—namely, Wesley, Savonarola, Cromwell (lay-preacher), Luther, Knox, Moody, "Billy" Sunday, Phillips Brooks, S. Parkes Cadman, etc.

It is true also in pastoral work. The supremely healthy preacher goes out among his shut-ins, his sick, and his discouraged, and he literally lifts them out and up with his overflow of health and happiness. He becomes a healer in a very real sense, just as Jesus was. He goes into a sick room and leaves a flood of health and sunshine behind him. He walks along the street and "changes the climate" of a gloomy, rainy day in a store or a business office. He actually performs miracles and cures. I am more and more coming to feel that it was out of the abundant overflow of his perfect physical life that Jesus lifted men up out of despondency, doubt—and even death—with his energy.

Into such a conception of the ministry comes the necessity for regular living, regular exercise, regular sleep and plenty of it, moderate eating, and plenty of fresh air.

"That day is not lost which is spent in the hunt," says the old Arabian precept. That legend comes from a land and a tradition which believe that every day is numbered and that life cannot be extended beyond the allotted number of days. Yet

even there is the belief that no day is lost to the preacher when it is spent on the golf links, at the swimming beach, on a tramp through the woods, or in whatever way he likes to take his recreation or his exercise. Regular exercise, enjoyable exercise—not the mechanical kind that you take each morning to the beat of the radio, and hate and dread; but exercise which is play and which gives joy—is that type which builds up an overflow out of which a preacher preaches successfully, and heals and cures and lifts.

Eight hours of sleep, without fail; making it up as it is missed; insisting upon that much as sternly as you insist upon the virtue of your wife; battling for it as one battles for God; sticking to that *régime* as one sticks to truth: that is a Divine duty—as much so as the devotional hour at the dawn of day. One of the most terrible sins of the modern ministry is the sin of ill health caused by hectic living, undersleeping; poisoned body and mind, resulting in irritation, quick temper, arrogancy, and often quarreling with loved ones and officials. Half of the divorces, half of the quarreling, half of the despondencies of life would be done away with if people kept their bodies free from fatigue poisons. How much is this a sacred duty to the preacher, who is supposedly a leader of people!

This overflow of health is a mountain-like asset in the pulpit, it is the asset of a mighty river flowing through a desert to make that desert blossom as

the rose in its curative effects in parish work among the sick, the lonely, the despondent, the troubled; it is "the rectitude and patience of the cliff" to a minister in his relations with his officials, his women, and his problems; it is the serenity of a garden; it is the abundance of an overflowing well in all of his relations with people in pulpit and home.

Let us preach out of the overflow of physical energies; let us cure, let us heal, let us raise men from the dead! That is our duty and our privilege.

II. Sermons Come Out of the Overflow of Ideas

A physically perfect young preacher had a long ministry between the years of thirty and forty in a certain city on the Atlantic seaboard. He was handsome, he was clever, he liked people, he went about doing good. He was an Apollo to look upon, and his smile would captivate the bitterest enemy.

But it was perfectly apparent, every time one heard him preach, that he was, as one man put it, "sucking his sermons out of his thumb." It is a figure of infantile relegation—but it is effective. One day a good friend said to that young man—a young man who boasted that he got his sermons out on Saturday night after midnight and on Sunday afternoon: "You'll either get something into your head or you are through in five years, boy! Up to this time you have been carried forward on your looks, your physique, your geniality, your friendli-

ness, and your personal charm. But that fades in time, and you had better be storing up something in your head!"

I am watching to see whether that boy heeds his friend's advice. I hope he will, for I love him. I doubt if he will.

I have read a good many books about preaching, and nearly all of them carry the general idea that every preacher ought to be reading so widely and experiencing life so grandly that he feels that, if he lived to be a hundred years old, he could never catch up with the ideas for sermons and illustrations which flow out of his mind.

There will be no "hand-to-mouth" feeling of existence if the preacher is reading at least a "book a week"—and it ought to be more. Many men, including busy President Roosevelt, Bishop William A. Quayle, and a score of others, have read a book a day.

"The average preacher out this way doesn't read a book a month," said a mid-Western preacher to me by way of criticism of my statement that I read a book a day.

I was ungodly and worldly enough to reply to that statement: "That is exactly why he is the average preacher. That is exactly why he would be the average doctor if he were a doctor, or the average lawyer if he were a lawyer, or the average parent! And he will remain the AVERAGE preacher to the

end of his days if he is not reading more than a book a month."

Books bulge back the world's horizons!

Books build ladders of light to the skies!

Books shake the soul of the world awake!

Books are spot-lights on the lives of those who preach!

Books are the keys that unlock the kingdoms of the earth to the preacher and, in turn, to his congregation!

Congregations are made up these days of college graduates, and they will not long continue to listen to preachers who give them nothing from Sunday to Sunday. That is the chief reason why congregations are small. There is nothing there for them: "The hungry sheep looked up and were not fed."

No man long survives in the great pulpits of the nation who is not reading prolifically. I know the truly great preachers of this nation—all of them, from coast to coast—personally. I say here, without exception, that every one of them reads voraciously. I have seen the traveling bags of men like Dr. Robert Freeman, Dr. Merton S. Rice, Dr. Burris Jenkins, Dr. S. Parkes Cadman, Dr. Charles Jefferson, Dr. Halford Luccock, Dr. Charles R. Brown, Dr. Lynn Harold Hough, Bishop Francis J. McConnell, Bishop Edwin Holt Hughes, and Bishop William F. McDowell literally stuffed with books. They read on trains, they read in the early morning hours, they read at night in bed, they read on ship

decks, they read, read, read, as if life depended upon it. They read because they like to read, and they read because they want to feed the sheep the next Sunday morning and evening.

They read because they want to preach out of the overflow of ideas.

III. Sermons Come Out of the Overflow of Life's Experiences

A preacher said to me once: "I never lose a chance to go through a General Electric laboratory, a glove manufacturing company, a stove works, a glass factory, a motion picture studio, a steel mill. I never lose a chance to see back-stage, a baseball game, a football game, or a crowd on election night. I never lose a chance to go to Europe or to go to the seashore. I never miss an opportunity to go to a fire or watch a parade, or hear a symphony."

"Why?" I asked him.

"It is all grist to my mill," he replied in a somewhat antiquated figure of speech, but not an antiquated idea.

So Bishop William A. Quayle manufactured his sermons—out of the abundance of his life-experiences.

Traveling, visiting, feeling, thinking, going, and coming are a part of life's experiences. Newspaper plants, candy plants, coal mines, schoolhouses, gymnasiums, kindergartens, and rose gardens are all a part of life's experiences.

The student on the cattle ship going to Europe and the Holy Land is having a university experience getting ready for an overflow ministry. The young preacher who gets to the Holy Land early in his ministry instead of going as the crowning event of his ministry is the preacher who will preach out of the overflow.

Every experience of life, every visit to a hospital, every time one sees a major operation in a clinic, every time one visits an insane asylum or a college chapel, one enriches life, one increases the overflow.

A man ought to preach out of the overflow of the past week's experiences, even as Will Rogers says, "All I know is what I read in the newspapers." Out of the overflow of current experiences much of his sermon ought to come. Every sermon ought to have something gleaned from the overflow of the past week's experiences—aye, even out of the overflow of Sunday morning's experiences. No preacher ought to go into the pulpit on Sunday morning without having read the morning newspapers so that he may link world events and the happenings of the day and the night before with his theme. There ought to be a feeling on the part of each congregation that there is more where that came from.

When Mr. S. S. McClure dealt with Robert Louis Stevenson he used to apologize for changing his manuscript, for depleting it and cutting it down. Stevenson always replied: "Do what you please with it. There is more where that came from."

Robert Louis Stevenson was preaching out of the overflow of ideas and experiences.

I like the preacher who goes to school every summer in Europe, the Holy Land, Mexico, the Grand Canyon, Yosemite, California, Glacier National Park; through New England in a Ford or a Lincoln; to the Great Lakes, to Roosevelt Dam, the Painted Desert, or the Petrified Forest. We ought to go to school on every vacation.

Sam Jones once stopped me on the street of a little West Virginia town when I was under ten years of age and asked me the way to the camp ground where he was to speak that afternoon. I told him. Then he asked me what time it was, and I pointed to the town clock. Then he asked me where a certain man lived, and I told him. Then he said to me something that I have never forgotten: "Boy, I'm going to school to you this morning! Thanks!"

So we ought to be going to school to somebody or somewhere every day, so that we may be preaching out of the overflow of experience.

IV. Sermons Come Out of the Overflow of Religious Experience

Conversion, rebirth, regeneration, a "religious experience" are fountains ever overflowing. It is a geyser, a Roosevelt dam, ever overflowing with the water of life which always causes the desert to blossom with green grass and flowers and grain;

and it is a power plant developing out of the overflow of that experience.

Not only is the validity of a "religious experience" attested to by religious history and the New Testament, but it is attested to by the great writers of all times. Tolstoy gives us "The Resurrection" with its story of the conversion of a young lawyer. Dostoevsky gives us "Crime and Punishment," Masefield gives us "The Everlasting Mercy," Hawthorne gives us "The Scarlet Letter," James gives us "Varieties of Religious Experience," Begbie gives us "Twice-Born Men."

Not only do the novelists and poets attest to the validity of this "religious experience," but every great psychologist of note attests to its reality and validity:

"Reality, reality, Lord Jesus Christ, thou art to me."

The early Church preachers had and needed little else to talk about. That was their one text, their one sermonic idea, their one theme; a definite religious experience!

They met in the catacombs, in the dark cellars, in the secret places, to talk about and preach about and to testify to what? Answer: "Religious experience!"

They would have been stone-dumb if they had not had a religious experience to talk about. The very stones would have cried out if they had not talked about it.

The Church itself was born in the upper room because of a "religious experience."

Just as Phillips Brooks said that he had a thousand sermons but only one text, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly," so the early Church leaders and preachers had many sermons but only one theme; that of a "religious experience."

Paul is a good witness to the validity and the reality of a "religious experience."

Then come the psychologists with their testimony: The Coes, the Jameses, the Overstreets, the Hadfields, the Baudouins.

Comes Dr. Richard Maurice Bucke, with his "Cosmic Consciousness," which is a mass of material to prove that no truly great genius from Buddha to Christ, Dante to Whitman, Emerson to Thoreau, but discovered and found birth for his genius in a great overflowing religious experience, which brought about a "Cosmic Consciousness," a sense of oneness with God and the eternal forces.

Certainly if this is true of poets, prophets, inventors, dramatists, essayists, Luthers, Pauls, Christ, it ought to be true of preachers; that out of the divine and the sublime overflow of a real religious experience they preach!

Then shall they be able to sing with feeling and with power, the reportorial instinct burning in them:

"I love to tell the story,
Of unseen things above,

Of Jesus and his glory,
Of Jesus and his love!"

I doubt if a man has a divine commission to preach if he has not had a definite religious experience of some unassailable, some impregnable, some definite type, through the overflow of which his life and his ministry are washed, and cleansed, and enriched, and out of the overflow of which he preaches.

V. Sermons Come Out of an Overflow of Love

With the religious experience behind one's ministry, there is the concomitant of love pouring forth all the time. Out of this overflow of love comes a great ministry and a great eloquence. Phillips Brooks had it in a remarkable degree—this overflow of love.

The minister who has that overflow of love will not be able to see with dry eyes a tired woman on a street car going home from work; he will not be able to see a scrub woman go into a building in a city at night that he will not interest himself in her problem, and that her problem will not haunt him day and night, particularly when he is writing and preaching sermons. A father in overalls going home to his family from the day's toil will tug at his heart until he sits down beside him on the street car and talks with him. And that talk will find reflection in his Sunday sermons. The boy orator on his great contest night will bring a rise of sympathy to this man,

and the prize fighter battling for a living, a Babe Ruth smashing out the home-run that wins the crucial game, the college half-back running the length of the field for a touch-down, a pregnant woman, a girl whose lover has deserted her, a girl in a circus on the high trapeze surpassing herself to amuse the public; the harlot on the street, the beggar at his door, the six-day bicycle racer in the moment of his hallucinations, the rebellious, stubborn high school boy or girl, the timid, shy child; the inarticulate man or woman, the Italian garbage collector, the newsboy, the washerwoman, the merchant, the thief, the blind, the maimed and halt; all of these will find in the overflow of the real minister's love a sense of sympathy and understanding which will make them friends. Out of this overflow of love, out of this sympathy with humanity, will come a feeling something akin to that expressed in Edna St. Vincent Millay's "Renascence:"

"All sin was of my sinning, all
Atoning mine, and mine the gall
Of all regret. Mine was the weight
Of every brooded wrong, the hate
That stood behind each envious thrust;
Mine every greed, mine every lust.
And all the while for every grief,
Each suffering, I craved relief
With individual desire—
Craved all in vain! And felt fierce fire
About a thousand people crawl;
Perished with each—then mourned for all!

A man was starving in Capri;
I felt his gaze, I heard his moan,
And knew his hunger as my own.
I saw at sea a great fog bank
Between two ships that struck and sank;
A thousand screams the heavens smote,
And every scream tore through my throat.
No hurt I did not feel, no death
That was not mine; mine each last breath
That, crying, met an answering cry
From the compassion that was I.
All suffering mine, and mine its rod:
Mine pity like the pity of God."

Out of such an overflow of love, of pity, of compassion comes the great preaching of a superb ministry.

CHAPTER II

DEVELOPING THE HOMILETIC MIND

One day in the city of Detroit a member of my Church persuaded the barber of the Detroit Athletic Club to come and hear me preach.

Curious to know the barber's reaction to the sermon and service the next morning, he went into the shop and said, "Well, what did you think of the sermon last night?"

"It was a fine sermon; but that preacher certainly has the funniest head of hair I ever saw on a man."

I stood on the brink of Niagara one day and heard a group of tourists discuss the falls. One was an engineer, and he was chiefly interested in his thoughts of the possible power-development of Niagara Falls; what had been done and what could still be done with that vast reservoir of electrical power. One was an artist, and he was interested in the colors of the water, green, blue, purple, and white, which swept over that immense brink. One was a poet, and he was dreaming great epics and lyrics out of that mystical waterfall; and Indian legends were sweeping through his creative mind. One was a preacher, and he was thinking of Niagara Falls in terms of sermon illustrations, in terms of life, in terms of preaching.

I once stood on the brink of the Grand Canyon and had somewhat the same experience. One man who stood there was a business man from San Francisco, and he talked incessantly about the possibilities of a bridge being thrown across that river at the foot of the abyss, which has actually been done during the past year. A cowboy was thinking of that abyss in terms of a great range for cattle. Another engineer was thinking of it in terms of building a dam across the river and turning the canyon into the greatest reservoir of power that the world had known up to that time. I, the preacher, was thinking of it in terms of what I would do with it in my preaching. What hundreds of illustrations and life lessons deluged me! I had not forgotten Honoré Willsie Morrow's "The Enchanted Canyon," which tells the story of a little rough East Side New York boy who was transformed by living a few months in that canyon. I would preach a sermon on that canyon. I would preach a dozen sermons on it. I would use Mrs. Morrow's book as the background of one sermon. I would make my audiences see the thoughtfulness of God in preparing that wonderland for his children. I even thought of the sermon theme. I would call it "God Thought of Us So Long Ago."

Having had such experiences, I was prepared for a sentence which I read later in Dr. James Black's "The Mystery of Preaching"—"I was chatting with a shoemaker the other day, and he made this remark,

'When I meet people, the first thing I look at is their shoes.' That [says Dr. Black] is the cobbler's Homiletic Mind."

Therefore I come to the suggestion of this chapter: that we who are preachers, and we who intend to be preachers, deliberately cultivate, or develop, what is here called the homiletic or preaching mind.

I. Playing Games with the Homiletic Mind

Some preachers eat, dream, and sleep with their Homiletic Minds wide open, like a young bird's mouth, for worms of preaching nourishment. I have been told by some older preachers that this is not good, but I believe that it is the very passion of the vocation. I believe that the preacher who always has his mind, his heart, and his eyes open—wistfully, eagerly open—will grow in song-power and wing-power like the young bird which instinctively opens its beak when it hears the mother homing on the wind at the nest's edge.

I had hardly gotten well acquainted with the golf terms—I barely knew a mashie from a niblick, a green from a fairway; with only two weeks of golf behind me—when I began to use golf homiletically. I not only preached about it, but I wrote three articles for a preacher's magazine on "Gunning for Golfers," "Getting Out of the Roughs of Life," and "Down the Fairway with Faith."

I made a few mistakes, over which I now smile since I have learned the game better. But one

thing I know, and that is: that in the particular church which I was serving, where ninety per cent of my men played golf, that eager, almost awkward use of the game I was just learning for homiletic material did not lose me any friends among the men of the church.

The preacher should watch every football game, every track meet, every baseball game, play every golf game with the Homiletic Mind.

Ty Cobb sliding to first at forty years of age ought to suggest something. Ty Cobb making one of his characteristic sacrifice hits ought to suggest sermonic material. A player on the Brown team, whom I knew as a student—a fine, clean fellow—made an infield hit over second, ran like mad to first, over first toward second; reached second safely. Then there was a dispute. The first baseman claimed that he had not touched first. The umpire, knowing his man, said, "Snell, did you touch first?" Reluctantly, but impelled by an inborn sense of honor, Snell said: "I'm sorry, but I did not. I overstepped it." Even the most stupid of us see the homiletic value of that incident in baseball. Baseball is full of such illustrations. Baseball is also the favorite sport of untold millions of American people, and the preacher who knows and uses baseball in his preaching is a wise preacher.

One day in Detroit I was speaking at a banquet in honor of Ty Cobb. I said at that banquet that Ty Cobb had been more of an inspiration to me than

any man in Detroit. I told them why. I said: "He is an old man in baseball; bald-headed, facing the exit sign—but this past season I have seen him beat out at least a dozen bunts to first by sliding to first. He gets to within fifteen feet of first base and then deliberately throws his body the rest of the way at danger to life and limb. He plays the game up to the last second. He will take more chances than a man half his years, and he never lets up. I have seen him win a game in the last ten seconds of play by a daring steal and slide into the home bag. In these days when my friend Bishop Hughes tells me that a lot of preachers think they are through at forty, it is a great inspiration to me to watch Ty Cobb play ball."

Later I got a note from Ty Cobb saying, "I have never had anything said to me that made me so happy as what you said at the banquet; that I was an inspiration to you—a preacher."

There ought never to be a football season go by that the preaching of the minister of God ought not to be touched every Sabbath with figures from the high school and college football field. Why? Because so many thousands of young boys and girls, men and women, are watching football and are fascinated with it. The alert preacher will make it a habit, wherever he is located, to see one or two of the biggest football games of the season in his area, and he will watch those games with a Homiletic Mind.

There is never a season goes by that a dozen heroic things do not occur on the football fields of America; that some spectacular run is not made, some high type of a Christian player does not develop.

The story of the Yale-Brown game in which a certain huge fullback lunged and plunged and twisted through the Yale line all afternoon—for the simple reason that his huge hulk seemed to be the only thing in that backfield that could make a dent on the stone wall of a Yale line—is a classic. That particular fullback made three of the four touchdowns of the game, including the final one. Both sides of the Bowl yelled themselves out, and then a great silence fell over the crowd just as they were carrying this big fullback off the field. Just at that moment of silence a boy arose in the top row of the Bowl and expressed the thoughts of the entire crowd in a piercing yell, "That's how big a man ought to be!"

We have plenty of precedent for watching athletic sports with the Homiletic Mind, for one Paul of Tarsus did it and did it constantly. He evidently watched with fascination the games in Athens and elsewhere. His writing and his preaching are literally permeated with figures of racing, wrestling, and the field and track meets of his day. He attended the games of his day with a Homiletic Mind.

Put on the whole armor of God.

* * *

For we wrestle not with flesh and blood.

* * *

Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness.

* * *

I count not myself to have attained; I press on!

* * *

I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Here is plenty of precedent; the precedent of a man whose mind was alert to the play of the people; the wrestling, the running matches, foot-racing, and the gladiatorial combats. He saw them, and he used them, and he used them homiletically. He watched the people in their leisure moments, and he went to the games with a Homiletic Mind.

I want to use as a transition paragraph from this division of my discussion to the next division, from sports and games to newspaper and magazine reading, a paragraph which I have just read in Will Rogers's dispatch. I quote it for three reasons: First, for its transition purposes; second, because it talks about a certain unusual athletic event of this season; and third, because it illustrates what I am about to say of how the preacher should read the newspapers with the Homiletic Mind:

January 3. Everybody is picking on that poor boy out there in California that ran the wrong way with that football. If I was an editorial writer, I would ask how many out of the hundred and ten million of the rest of us are headed the wrong way. How many of us would have had even the presence of mind to pick up a fumble? How many of us grab out of the

scrimmage of life what we think is success and don't know till we reach the goal line whether it is the right goal or not? So, come on, preachers, hop on. This is your text. All I want is ten per cent of Sunday's collections to get this boy a medal for at least doing something different from one million other college boys, even if it was wrong. At least his mind wasn't standardized.

Yours, WILL ROGERS.

And now, through this paragraph from Will Rogers, let us go from walking across the athletic fields of America with Homiletic Minds into the business of reading—newspapers, books, magazines, billboards, everything—with our preacher hearts wistfully eager for something that will enrich our lives and bring us more closely into contact with life as it is lived to-day.

II. READING WITH THE HOMILETIC MIND

Of course we all do this: preachers and would-be preachers.

Even Will Rogers says, "All I know I read in the papers." And immediately this particular preacher proceeds to preach us a sermon, with a touch of humor in it every day.

Most preachers might well learn from Will Rogers that the newspapers are to be read with a Homiletic Mind. The reason: First, because nearly everybody reads them; and when a preacher makes a reference to something that has appeared in the papers he has an understanding audience to begin with. Second, because the newspapers are chronicles of human life as it is lived to-day: this hour, this

minute. Arthur Brisbane—no matter what his theology may be, or his lack of theology; no matter what medium he may use to reach the people (he does reach them—some fifteen million of them)—is also a good illustration of a certain type of a preacher who takes his texts, his illustrations, and his paragraph outlines from the daily newspapers. He cultivates a preaching mind in his reading of the news dispatches.

The magazines ought to be read with a Homiletic Mind. I believe a preacher ought to know what is in the magazines. He may stand aloof from the more popular type of magazine; but as for this needy preacher he reads them all from the *Atlantic Monthly* to the *Motion Picture*. He never lets a month go by that he does not read at least one motion picture magazine. The preacher who scorns this type of literature forgets that millions of young people in his church want to know what Douglas Fairbanks, Mary Pickford, Estelle Taylor, and Mary Philbin are doing. They are interested in Charlie Chaplin and Harold Lloyd, whether we want them to be or not. I, for one preacher, do not intend to pass up that group of magazines which will give me an insight into the lives of the heroes and heroines who fascinate my young people every day in the week. I, for one, am going to get into that world wherein my young people live almost every sleeping and waking hour.

Besides this good reason: I have gotten some of

the most striking and beautiful and dramatic illustrations of my ministry from reading the lives of the motion picture actors.

I remember one poor boy, a drug fiend, who was a popular idol for years and then went to ruin. But a day before he died he rallied. They wanted to give him drugs to ease the pain, but, in a last glorious flush of his old beautiful self, he said: "No drugs now! I want to go out clean!"

A picture of Mary Pickford as a little eight-year-old girl on an empty stage trying out before David Belasco, with two chairs in front of her, pleading the cause of an old mother and her child. When she was through, tears glistened in the eyes of Belasco, and he took that little eight-year-old girl into his arms, called to a stage hand, "Put out the light, Dave!" walked over to one red stage light that is always kept burning, and said, "Little girl, some day you are going to be an actress—and a great one!"

Every preacher reads his books with the Homiletic Mind of course. I have even known great popular preachers who read railroad signs, billboards, headlines, advertising slogans, and hand bills with a Homiletic Mind and who, when they have read them, put them to the most forceful use in their pupits. A man who to-day can take a homely, everyday phrase and do more with it than some preachers can do with a poem is Dr. Merton S. Rice, pastor of the Metropolitan Methodist Church in Detroit, who perhaps draws regularly, year in and

year out, winter and summer, the largest crowds of any preacher in this nation.

III. Walking Through the Woods with the Homiletic Mind

Bishop William A. Quayle evidently walked through the woods with the Homiletic Mind, for I have heard him offer, like flashes of sunlight on a dark day, like the singing of birds on a spring morning, such flashes of symbolism as these:

It was as empty as a last year's bird's nest.

* *

It fell on my soul as softly as the fluttering feather from a seagull's wing as it touched the white-tipped waves of the sea.

* * *

Now and then a redbird blazes like a sudden star and calls with a springtime voice from a winter woodland.

* * *

The desert is brewing clean air for a continent to breathe.

* * *

My voice, with the velocity of a flock of quails when they first take wing, answered, "I will."

* * *

It was a song like the heartache of the falling leaf set to melody.

* * *

He looks at the lily, and the lily has its way with his soul. God did a thing when he invented the water lily.

* * *

In heedless, headlong loveliness the streams by the ten thousands run in disheveled grace like a woman's hair flying in the wind.

* * *

The sails hung limp as a dead bird's wings.

* * *

It is the tragedy of a windless world.

Here was a great soul who walked through the woods with a preacher's mind and saw at every turn an unforgettable phrase, symbol, and simile that would burn like lightning, or comfort him like the winds of evening, or stir the soul like the tempests and thunders on the sea, or lull to sleep like the whisper of the wind in the trees.

IV. Going To the Theater with the Homiletic Mind

The wise preacher goes to the theater with a Homiletic Mind.

If he does, he will have something to take back to his pulpit the next Sunday. He will have the picture of a boy in "Merton of the Movies" who knelt and prayed, "O God, make me an actor—one of the best." He will have the burning, triumphant, challenging declaration of that young boy in "The White Cargo," "I'm white and, by God, I'm going to stay white!"

He will have the ringing phrases of "The Fool," "The Enemy," "The Miracle," the beauty and wistful wonder of "Cyrano de Bergerac," the ugly and yet undishonored hero, with the deformed nose, who sings as he dies:

> "One thing I have guarded to the close.
> I'll make obeisance to my God this night,
> Sweep the blue threshold of immortal light,
> With that you may not touch. Let none presume!
> Stainless, unbent, I have kept . . . my plume!"

The preacher who goes to the theater with the Homiletic Mind will enrich his preaching to a degree that he does not dream. He will have real human beings walking up and down his pulpit; and dialogue that will thrill his congregation as it has thrilled theatrical audiences before; and mayhap—will result in making church congregations once a week as large as theatrical audiences are seven times a week—and more. Who knows? At least it is worth trying.

V. Traveling With the Homiletic Mind

Dr. Halford Luccock, while crossing the Atlantic one summer, sent me a little verse which, while it is not exactly Shakespearean in its form, is human enough to have been written by that bard:

> "Mrs. Hill
> Is very ill,
> And nothing will improve her
> Until she sees
> The Tuileries
> And waddles through the Louvre."

So it is with the ministry of many men. It is very ill, and nothing will improve it until the minister sees the Tuileries, the Louvre, the Vatican, Westminster Abby, Notre Dame, and Florence, and Rome, and London, and Paris, and Switzerland, and the ends of the earth.

There is no school like the School of Travel.

The preacher should go to school as a traveler to

John Knox and his Scotland; to Calvin and his Switzerland; to John Huss and his Poland; to John Wesley and his England; and to Martin Luther and his Germany.

He should travel with a Homiletic Mind through these nations and these experiences, as a background for his sermonic services to humanity.

VI. Jesus Had the Homiletic Mind

Jesus saw everything in human life with the preaching mind.

A study of his parables and his figures of speech will reveal the fact that he walked with fishermen by blue Galilee and watched them bring in their haul, watched them cast their nets, mend their nets, and peddle their wares with a Homiletic Mind that is nothing short of miraculous in its inclusiveness and its simplicity.

When Jesus walked through the agricultural regions of the Holy Land he walked with the Homiletic Mind, and thereafter his parables, and his talks, and his private conversations were full of what he saw and heard and garnered from the chaff of the threshing floor. Indeed, Jesus had plenty of precedent and example in this method, for the old prophets of the Hebrews also walked the fields with preaching minds and took their illustrations from the threshing floor, the barren field, and the wooded hillsides.

Some of the most beautiful figures that Jesus used

were the figures of "the shepherd" and "the sower." He also took his symbols from political life, and there is nothing so full of meaning as his famous figure of "unto Caesar that which is Caesar's."

One needs not discuss this characteristic of Jesus at length. He seemed to be walking and moving and having his very being with the Homiletic Mind. He walked along the shores of Galilee, along the highways of Judea, across the fields and up the mountain steeps, down the "Road to Jericho," and across corn fields on the Sabbath—but to teach immortal truths. He saw fields ripe unto the harvest and he saw fields barren as wind-blown rocks—but to teach symbols of human life. He saw mustard overrunning a field, and barren fig trees, and thistles, and seaweed, and fish, and birds, and eagle nests, and wind-tossed waves—but to teach and preach.

No wonder Ludwig in "The Son of Man" says of this man of God, this Son of the Divine, who traveled about in his way and his day with the preaching instinct, "The lad Jesus notices—for he notices everything which may help to unlock the mystery of the human heart."

When one has learned the fine art of walking, living, reading, seeing, thinking, breathing with the "Homiletic Mind" he develops a fine overflow for his preaching which pours out into his sermons like a full stream.

CHAPTER III

THE OBJECTIVES OF THE SERMON

THE preacher ought to know where he is going in a sermon. The audience ought to see this destination, this objective. There will be a sense of richness and overflow if this is true of every sermon.

As a student in college, I remember what an impression the big word "teleological" made on me.

I was proud, first, that I could pronounce it without stumbling; and second, that I could grasp its meaning. It has always been one of my favorite words in the dictionary. It has also been a comforting thought to me—that the world seems to be created with some design, with some purpose; that the elements of the universe seem to have an end in view.

It is well for a preacher, when he preaches, to have some "end in view."

We know, when we play golf, that the end in view is to get a lower score than our fellow golfers; in other games, to get a larger score than our rivals.

Too many preachers preach without any objectives to their sermons.

What are the objectives that a minister ought to have in mind when he starts to write and to deliver a sermon?

I. A Sermon Should Be Educational

By a wide reading of sermons, by hearing the great preachers of our time, and by observing the types of sermons which please people, I have learned that people want facts in a sermon. A man need not be particularly eloquent if he has facts. Time and time again, I have noted that men with new information, men with facts, will hold the attention of an audience, while a much more eloquent speaker without facts finds a restless and resisting audience. We can illustrate this very easily by remembering that when men came back from France, during the war, no matter how feeble they were as public speakers, they were listened to with great eagerness by large audiences everywhere. Men who come back from Labrador, men who bring to us newly-discovered scientific truths from the laboratories of the world; the explorers from Africa, Mount Everest, the North and South Pole; our Lindberghs and Byrds; our girl aviators—if they bring facts, we are eager to listen to them.

The man who has facts to-day is sure of an attentive audience, especially if he speaks as one having authority. I mean by that—if his audience believes that he has gone into those facts, has experienced them, or is reporting them with authority. You cannot argue that point of authority with an audience. You cannot diagram it, you cannot blueprint it; they will know. If you speak with the

note of knowledge and authority, the audience will sense it and heed it.

To-day we are in the midst of a diamond field of facts. We stand on the edge of great newly-discovered truths which are about to remake the earth. We preachers ought to keep to the fore on all scientific discoveries. Our audiences ought to get new truths from us, first hand.

We ought to act as a clearing house for the new discoveries in science, astronomy, chemistry, biology, physics, and invention. We preachers ought to read so widely that we keep up with modern scientific truth in every field; then that truth ought to come to our people with the stamp of Christianity on it. Every new discovery is of God, and it ought to have a Christian interpretation when it is handed on to the people of our churches.

One of the great tragedies of youth is that it has heard little scientific truth in the churches. Then it goes to college, and science seems to conflict with religion; and youth is upset, disturbed, appalled. He has a feeling that he has been cheated and deceived.

The realm of psychology ought to be our particular field. When a preacher does not know psychology, which is the science of human conduct, human actions and reactions, he is like an organist who does not know the technique of the instrument on which he is supposed to play.

Therefore, I say that the first objective of the

sermon ought to be educational. The sermon which has as its first objective the educational or informing aim is pragmatic. It works; it speaks with the authority of facts. People want to know. The Dramatic Book Sermon is a good vehicle for this phase of the objective of the sermon; at least, this type of sermon brings a book and the contents of a book to the audience. It is informing; it does have facts. Particularly is this true of some nonfiction books like Pupine's "The New Reformation," or Paul DeKruif's "Microbe Hunters," or "Hunger Fighters."

II. A Sermon Ought to be Inspirational

In this hurrying, rampant world on wheels, this era of machinery and jazz and speed, men and women come to church like used-up batteries. They ought to be able to get their mental and spiritual batteries recharged by a sermon. They ought to get enough spiritual, mental, and physical electricity to carry them through the week.

A tired business man has a right to expect that much from a church service and a sermon. If he comes into a church service tired, weary, and worn, he has a right to expect that he will go forth from that service refreshed and quickened, just as a battery is immediately after it has been recharged.

I have a test which I like to apply to poetry, drama, music, and sermons. If they take me out of time and make me feel eternal, then I call them

great, in the finest sense of that word "great." A sermon ought to take a man, a woman, a child, out of time and make him feel eternal. It ought to remind him that he is made "just a little lower than the angels," and that he is "crowned with life eternal." It ought to remind him that he is the son of God and that he is almost omnipotent himself.

I think that I can express about what I feel that a sermon ought to do under the second objective, which is inspiration, by quoting a little verse of my own writing:

I AM OMNIPOTENT!

I am an Eagle, born to fly
Up Stellar Highways of the sky
Along the Milky Way, where blaze
New Dawns, new Planets, and new Days!
I am man-born, God-led, sky-bent;
Almost Omnipotent!

I am a new sun blazing white
Down the long world's chaotic night;
A planet on its orbit flung,
A new Mars in the heavens hung·
Sky-born, sun-bred, God-sent;
Almost Omnipotent!

I am some star-dust, strayed
To earth, and in His image made
To have dominion over earth and sea.
"A little lower than the angels." He
Has crowned me—who forever meant
That you and I should be
Almost Omnipotent!

Something of this point of view ought to come to every man, woman, youth, and child listening to a sermon. There ought to be an inspirational objective to every sermon which will take people out of time and make them know that they are eternal, just a little lower than the Godhead. We have Biblical authority of great frequency and force for that objective in preaching.

I note that Bishop William A. Quayle used this objective a great deal. I have also noted that Dr. Frederick Shannon does the same thing in his sermons. I realize that most successful preachers have somehow felt this urge to inspire.

III. A Sermon Should Calm the Restless Soul

What people need in every sermon is something that will quiet the soul. In an age which is afflicted with what we commonly call nervous breakdowns, "brainstorms," and after a hectic, wild, almost hysterical week, when people come to church, they ought to come to something that will quiet their souls, something that will still their restlessness, something that will bring into their storm-tossed minds that same peace which came to Galilee.

I was speaking to a crowd of shell-shocked boys in France during the war. The nurse in the ward told me that the boys would have to stand up as I spoke, or they couldn't keep still. It was a curious crowd of twisting, shaking, twitching boys to which I spoke. I didn't do much good in my sermon, but

when I came to the prayer, I prayed: "O God, come into the hearts of these boys. Thou who didst still the waves of storm-tossed Galilee, bring peace to their bodies and to their souls."

Much to my surprise, and to the surprise of the nurse, when I concluded that prayer, their tremblings had perceptibly ceased. A great calm seemed to have settled over their weary bodies at the suggestion of the power, the calm, and the peace that were in the soul of Jesus.

One of the objectives of every sermon preached in "these tumbling, tumultuous, turbulent, storm-tossed days," as Bishop Quayle used to call them, must be to produce a spirit of calm, quiet meditation, reverence, and worship for the soul.

Each sermon ought to bring the "peace that passeth understanding" to what the theater calls "the tired business man" (for we have him in the church service also); to the weary, wistful mother; to the distracted, disturbed young man and woman, baffled by life's problems. Each sermon ought to take a soul which is restless and dismayed and bring a sense of peace, calm, and quiet to that soul; such quiet and calm as came to storm-tossed Galilee when Jesus spake, "Peace, be still!" such calm as came to the men and women possessed of devils when Jesus spake to their souls; such calm as Elizabeth Barrett Browning dreamed and pictured in:

"The little birds flew East,
And the little birds flew West;
And I smiled to think God's Greatness
Flowed around our Incompleteness;
'Round our Restlessness, His Rest."

IV. A Sermon Should Bring the Abundant Life to People

It is the preacher's privilege and mission to teach men how to take care of their bodies. Therefore, he ought to be an advocate of exercise and athletics, of all forms of recreation, or re-creation. He ought to be interested in sports. He ought to know about insulin, radium, and violet rays. He ought to be the first to tell his people that insulin will control diabetes, that the violet ray is a sure cure for rickets, that salt is bad for the arteries, and that a heavy salt eater will surely be predisposed to hardening of the arteries.

He ought to be the champion of all cultural life, and his sermons ought to radiate with an interest in music, drama, poetry, and art. He ought to bring people into the "abundant life" of a new appreciation of the beautiful in nature. If he teaches people to love sunsets, and roses, and bridal wreath, he will make life more abundant for them.

Bringing to people the abundant life means bringing to them a love for nature; it means teaching them how to care for their bodies, it means teaching them to have an interest in keeping their sluggish bodies alert through constant and regular exercise.

It means teaching them to love books and great poetry and great art. One of the surest ways to carry the abundant life to people in sermons is through the mission of great books.

V. A Sermon Should Bring the Plan of Salvation to the Attention of Men

Until men have rediscovered the sense of sin, there is little hope for a final reconciliation with God the Father; the prodigals of life must be reminded that they have a Father. Therefore, the objective of every sermon ought to be reconciliation.

The plan of salvation includes this sense of sin, this consciousness of the need of a higher power than our own. We no longer seem to be aware of sin, or of wrongdoing. We feel that we are all right, that we need no reconciliation, no returning to the Father in penitence and humility.

When we have induced this sense of sin, a feeling of repentance is the next step in the plan of salvation. Then comes what we call, in the New Testament phrase, "rebirth." Dr. Bucke in his "Cosmic Consciousness" takes a thousand pages to show scientifically, through laboratory work which reaches back to the beginning of time, that all great geniuses, all men who have in any way affected the trend of human events, have experienced this sudden upheaval—call it regeneration, call it rebirth, call it conversion, call it reconciliation with God, call it what you will. Dr. James of Harvard,

Dr. Coe of Union, Dr. McDougal, Dr. Bucke—all the great psychologists recognize its place in human experience. The New Testament recognizes it, and the world of literature recognizes it.

Tolstoy's "The Resurrection" is the story of an old-fashioned Methodist type of conversion. John Masefield's "The Everlasting Mercy" is such a story. Poetry, fiction, psychology, and drama recognize this experience as universal. It is the dominant note of the New Testament plan of salvation that, through Jesus Christ our Saviour, men may be reconciled to the Father.

This is the great, dominant objective of a sermon: To bring men back to God; to reconcile them to the Father, through Jesus Christ and his Church.

The man who has had in his life this upheaval, this coming of "cosmic consciousness," this sudden realization of "oneness with God," this "rebirth," will understand, as did John Wesley and Whitefield, and Sankey and Torrey, and Moody and Chapman, and Sunday, that there is no more important objective in the sermon than to lead men to this experience, to point out its possibility, and to urge human beings to this high and holy moment.

I cannot be content to close a discussion of this last objective of the sermon without buttressing what I have to say by quoting briefly from Gamaliel Bradford's "Life and I." In the chapter on "Christ and Not I" he talks of this experience of conversion or rebirth.

He first makes a tremendous plea for a renaissance of the "sense of sin." He refers to Dostoevsky's "Crime and Punishment," telling the story of its scientifically educated hero, who kills a hateful old woman so that he may live his life with her money. He tells of how this hero suffers the bitterest anguish of remorse afterwards. Then he adds, "This may be regarded as typical of the complications in which the modern idea of expedient morals may sometimes result."

Then he adds two paragraphs about sin and the sense of sin which are worth remembering in the light of this final objective of the sermon which I present:

> For century upon century sin has played an enormous part in the world. The saints have recognized it, reviled it, condemned it, have pointed out its enthralling horror in others and bewailed its still more evident and smothering tyranny in themselves.
>
> Perhaps we have lost as well as gained, and it may be that sin, like some other things, is not quite dead yet.

Then Mr. Bradford turns from this sense of sin to the experience of repentance and conversion from sin, and says:

> And then comes religion, and souls worn out with the wickedness and the weariness of this world, sick of their own failures and frailty, and torn with the sense of sin, throw wide the doors to a divine revelation of comfort and relief.
>
> And then there came the presence of God, the exquisite touch of Christ upon the heart, the assurance of his salvation, bringing into it comfort and hope, and the relief and ecstacy

were apparently as poignant as the despair had been. For the moment, at any rate, sin and the burden of sin were cast behind, and the radiance of pure joy filled and overwhelmed the spirit with a rapture of delight.

Then Mr. Bradford quotes Professor Underwood in what Mr. Bradford terms "his dispassionate, psychological study" of conversion when Underwood says:

> The most remarkable fruit of conversion is seen in the manner in which it has brought about complete and permanent deliverance from every known sin. Indisputable evidence on this point is so abundant that we are embarrassed with a wealth of riches.

Finally, Mr. Bradford concludes, after this quotation from Professor Underwood:

> If this is true, conversion was indeed a magnificent spiritual instrument, and the loss of it would be a deplorable deprivation for humanity.

There need be, and, indeed, there is no "deplorable deprivation for humanity" if the final objective of the sermon is that of bringing men to a "sense of sin," to a psychology of repentance, and of reconciliation with God through the experience of conversion or rebirth.

These then are the "ends in view"; these ought to be the dominant objectives of the sermon:

1. Educational.
2. Inspirational.
3. Calm-producing.
4. To bring "the abundant life."
5. Reconciliation with God.

In some such richness as this chapter implies shall the objective of the sermon be maintained and kept in mind. Then shall there come to the hearers of the sermon the feeling that there are vast storehouses, great upturned clouds overflowing into their souls, in the spirit of Edna St. Vincent Millay's lines:

> "O God, I cried, give me new birth
> And put me back upon the earth!
> Upset each cloud's gigantic gourd
> And let the heavy rain, down-poured
> In one big torrent, set me free,
> Washing my grave away from me!"

The audience which feels that some gigantic cloud has been upset in "one big torrent," setting men free and washing their graves away from them because of the overflowing abundance of that sermon, will go away from the church refreshed and redeemed to tell the glad good news to all men.

CHAPTER IV

THE TESTS OF A GREAT SERMON

IMMEDIATELY following the chapter on the objectives of a sermon we ought to consider the tests of a great sermon. For, if a sermon meets certain tests, it will give the feeling that it has come out of a certain richness of supply comparable to the hidden springs of life, or the well of which Jesus spoke, flowing up into everlasting life for those who will drink from it.

In order to meet these tests which we put to a sermon, that sermon must have poured up out of the overflow of life and love.

We put tests to Business. Stockholders and Boards of Directors demand that business meet the test of making dividends.

We put tests to Drama. A group of men we call the critics apply these tests, and even the greatest of actors and actresses must face these tests.

The Annapolis candidate must go through a rigid series of tests before he is even admitted to that academy.

Al Smith could not stand the tests of public opinion, and every time he spoke over the radio and on a public platform he injured his own cause. When the spot light of public opinion is thrown upon

the personality of a public character, that man has a most severe series of tests to meet, most of them being subtle and psychological.

> "I do not like you, Dr. Fell.
> The reason why I cannot tell.
> But this one thing I know full well:
> I do not like you, Doctor Fell!"

The test of a good executive is said to be the ability to put other people to work and to organize programs and get results.

So the sermon must meet certain definite tests, whether the preacher wishes that to be true or not. That is the inevitable law of human psychology.

The old Scotch sermon-testers of "Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush" may not be among us in such numbers, nor with such amateurish theological discrimination, nor with such Scotch candor, or such Scotch rigidity; yet we have them, and the sermon must rise or fall, and the preacher with the sermon, if the sermon cannot meet these tests—and others which certain localities or certain local conditions produce.

I. The Sermon Must Meet the Test of Being Interesting

This is not the most important test, but it is the first test. I mean that it must be interesting, or it will never survive to meet the other tests which I am going to suggest. If it gets by that first test, it will have its chance to meet the others.

This first test is like the hurdle race. If the runner knocks down the first hurdle, he is disqualified, even though he does not knock down any of the other hurdles. So is it with the test of being interesting.

The introduction is vital to this first test of a sermon.

The old-time newspaper editor tells the cub: "Get off with a crack. Tell the story in the first paragraph. Interest them in the first line, or you're a goner!"

The test of a good first paragraph in a newspaper story is that it must be brief, awakening, and unusual.

Therefore the first thing to do to make a sermon interesting is to look well to the introduction; that it be brief; that it have a snap to it; that it launch you into the main thought with as little delay as possible.

This is true of a service as well as of a sermon. I have seen hundreds of services ruined and the people put to sleep by long preliminaries. Any preliminary that runs more than half an hour is a bad preliminary from the psychological standpoint. So it is with a sermon.

To be interesting a sermon must be more concrete than abstract. It must have human beings walking up and down its highway; it must be rich in illustration, but not overburdened with them. It must have illustrations selected from everyday life, from fields of knowledge that an audience understands;

from instruments and vehicles with which an audience is familiar; from current events, opinions, and newspapers.

It must be human. It must move with rapidity from start to finish. It must be apparent to the audience that it is on the way somewhere, and that it is an interesting way.

It must, in a sense, be a joy-ride. It must be like an automobile ride; even like a Sight-Seeing Bus—and it must be pointing out objects by the way: trees, Niagara Falls, Ford plants, monuments, great business institutions, stores, human beings, parks, rivers, oceans, accidents, tragedies, mountain peaks in the distance, great churches, forests, green lawns, great palaces of the rich, humble homes of the poor, golf links, baseball fields, children pouring out of school; orchards, street cars, other buses; dogs, horses, "the cattle on a thousand hills," blue skies, sunsets, starlit nights, curves in the highway, unknowns, knowns, history, stars, astronomy, billboards, signs, fences, life!

Yes, I dare say it! Every sermon must be as interesting as a Rubber-Neck Wagon ride in a new city—and it must be in a new city every week.

II. It Must Meet the Test of Being Informing

There is a fascination of facts.

There is the eloquence of facts.

The facts vs. theory people must feel that they

have gotten something from every sermon they hear.

"I felt as if I'd been somewhere," said a boy to one of the ushers going out of a certain preacher's church. That was a high and holy compliment.

Every man ought to feel that he has been somewhere and that he has gotten something. I attended a vaudeville show one day, and I heard one of the characters repeat time and time again until it got to be funny by repetition, "I want to go places, ring doorbells, and meet people!"

That is what every sermon ought to do. It ought to take your audience places and they ought to come face to face with facts and folks.

Another word for this might be that every sermon ought to be educational.

With the whole world of science, chemistry, astronomy, nature, aviation, medicine, literature open to a preacher's reading, it ought to be a part of his privilege and pleasure to make every sermon informing and educational—thus interesting.

A great help for meeting this test of a sermon is the Dramatic Book Sermon of which I have spoken elsewhere. Through this type of homiletics one is permitted to bring, at least, the heart of a great book to a congregation at one sitting if he himself has thoroughly saturated himself with that book in his reading. Through the Dramatic Book Sermon the congregation gets a book at least, a book about which one can talk at the office the next week.

They get a book of fiction or a non-fiction book, but they get a book. That book will make a sermon meet the test of being interesting at least.

In a book of fiction you will have human beings walking up and down the pulpit platforms; you will have dialogue with the touch of reality about it; you will have great utterances and great sentences which will ring in the hearts of the people forever.

III. It Must Meet the Test of the Emotional Appeal

Mr. Bigelow, editor of *Good Housekeeping*, wrote me a personal letter about a little poem of mine, in which he said:

> *Dear Dr. Stidger:* I am the one who selects the poetry for *Good Housekeeping;* so your verses came to the right place. I am always looking for what, for want of a better term, I call the emotional quality.

The good short story or the perfect novel must have this emotional quality.

I have many times read through the collections of great short stories of the year, the dramas and the great poems of the year, and I have invariably found that these pieces of literature have as their dominant note the emotional quality.

You do not reach people through their heads, but through their hearts.

You can talk all day about helping the poor Italians in a certain crisis, and the public will not listen; but if you will tell the individual story of

"Little Sick Tony," you will find that the coffers are flooded with help. It is the concrete emotional appeal and not the abstract intellectual appeal that gets over to the hearts of a congregation as it does to the hearts of a newspaper audience.

I have heard a staid old college professor, a philosopher, say of the preachers that come to the college church: "If they would only forget that we are college professors, and would preach to our hearts—with enough good sense to keep our respect, but making their direct appeal to our hearts—I would be happier. But the minute a preacher comes to this church he feels that he must make an 'utterance,' that he must dwell in the atmosphere of the academic and the abstract. He forgets that we are human beings and that we have our heart-hungers, and our sufferings, and our loneliness, and our emotions as well as others."

The unforgettably great preachers have had this emotional appeal. They have gone straight to the hearts of their hearers. The Parkers, the Beechers, the Talmages, the Moodys, the Torreys, the Brookses are the unforgettable preachers.

IV. Must Meet the Test of Gripping the Soul of an Audience

My own personal test of a sermon is, "Does it grip?"

The actor says, "Did it get over the footlights?"

Signs of gripping are: Silence, alertness, eagerness,

forgetfulness of time and place, sitting on the edge of the seats, tears, the appearance of being lifted up and out of time and being made to feel eternal.

When I sit in a congregation, if a sermon grips me—holds me tense, lifts me up; when it seems that what the preacher is saying matters to him; when his fire sets me on fire, when his tears bring tears to my eyes, when his anxiety makes me anxious; when his soul reaches out and grips my soul as a man's hand grips another hand—then I know that I have heard a great sermon. It must have the gripping quality.

V. It Must Meet the Test of Linking Up With Life

Dr. Fosdick, in a *Harper's Magazine* article, said that one of the truest tests of a sermon was that it should touch life for a large area of the congregation to which it was preached.

Dr. Parker used to say: "If I had my ministry to live over again, I would preach more to broken hearts."

Psychology comes to the help of the preacher here.

If he knows the universal laws of psychology, if he is constantly reading widely and deeply in the field of psychological research, he will be able to touch life at widely different points and areas in every sermon that he preaches; and I doubt if he can without a wide reading of psychology. I do not know of any more vital type of reading than psychol-

ogy for the minister of God. He is, through such reading, living in the realm of human actions and reactions, in the realm of human conduct, and human hopes, fears, faiths, and human possibilities as yet untouched and unsought.

He must link his sermons up with civic life, with domestic life, with the life and thought of children, of his young people, of his people who are hoary with age. He must know the "flapper mind," and he must know "senescence." He must link his sermons up with political campaigns, Red Cross movements, Associated Charities, baseball, golf, tennis, skating, the drama, the motion picture, and with college and high school activities. He must be a part of all that he meets, as Walt Whitman said; and he must be "all things to all men," as Paul says. His sermons must meet the test of linking up with life—which, expressed in a single word, means that they must meet the test of reality

VI. The Sermon Must Have a Spiritual Appeal

I do not know exactly how to differentiate this test from the emotional test.

I might illustrate it by saying that I believe that Ethel Barrymore, Maude Royden, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Marion Talley, Roland Hayes have what I think of as a spiritual appeal in their approach to the public.

It seems to be an intense desire to serve; a desire so deep, so tender, and so alive that it leaps over the

stage or the pulpit and finds its way into the hearts of an audience.

In Edgar Saltus's story of "Mary Magdelene" Mary tells of listening to Jesus preach on the shores of Galilee, and she says that the words that came from his lips seem to fly like the song of a bird into her heart.

That is what I mean by the spiritual appeal. It is almost indescribable, but very real when you find it in a public character, in such people as I have presented as illustrations. I believe that this appeal can be cultivated. I believe that, when a preacher actually loves his audience in his heart, love will fly like a bird song from his heart to the hearts of his audience, and then his sermons will meet this sixth test of a great sermon, without his knowing it.

I might even call this test the test of sincerity. No insincere sermon will ever have the spiritual appeal. No insincere preacher can ever meet this test of preaching.

VII. It Must Meet the Test of Bringing Some Kind of a Verdict

David Smith, in "The Art of Preaching," says, "A sermon should be like a speech concluding with a motion."

I want to say that, first of all, a sermon ought to make people uncomfortable. A man said to a preacher friend of mine, "I'd come to hear you preach more often, but you always make me un-

comfortable and dissatisfied with myself, and I'm too lazy to change."

James, the Harvard psychologist, says that no man ought to listen to a sermon or an address on immigration that he does not at least speak kindly to the Italian conductor on the way home; that no man should hear a sermon on the question of color and race that he does not stop to have a chat with the colored janitor the first chance he gets.

The right kind of a sermon will impel that. It will bring some kind of a verdict. It may bring the verdict of an immediate surrender of a life to God, such as preachers see happen very often.

One preacher told me once of a sermon at the conclusion of which an old man staggered down the aisle of the church and threw himself over the altar in prayer. I know of a preacher who was preaching a Memorial Day sermon when he suddenly felt moved to invite the hundred or more veterans to kneel at the altars of his church, and every man of them came trooping, stumbling, half running.

One of the objectives of every sermon ought to be to win men to Christ, and there ought to be some kind of a verdict. It may be the verdict of a decision to live a higher type of life; to go out and serve people; to be more kindly; to act differently in home, in business, in human relationships; it may be a verdict to read more, to think more, to love more. But the sermon must meet the test of some kind of a verdict.

He would be a funny lawyer who presented his case just to show off his eloquence and did not either ask for or expect a verdict from the jury.

He would be a funny kind of a salesman who came up to the point of the sale and then walked off satisfied with himself because he had made a good presentation of his product—without getting a sale.

He would be a funny kind of a lover who made his proposal eloquently and feelingly and then ran off before his sweetheart had a chance to make a decision.

So a minister is a strange minister and a sermon is an incomplete thing unless it looks toward, expects, plans for, waits for, and induces—yea, impels—some kind of a verdict or decision.

CHAPTER V

THE OVERFLOW OF "THE HIDDEN YEARS"

PSYCHOLOGISTS tell us that the time to start in on the training of a child is with its grandparents—or back even further.

So is it with a preacher. The time to start in on the training of a preacher, and the time for a preacher to get ready for his "Giant Hour" or for his "Great Chance" or for his "Great Church," is a good many years before that "Giant Hour" comes to him.

John Drinkwater uses a phrase to describe the way in which Lincoln handled himself when his great hour came, and this is the phrase:

"And Lincoln was the lord of his event."

Preachers are the "lords of their events" when those events come, providing they have been spending a good many years getting ready; providing they have thought and read, traveled and visioned, dreamed and wrought, played and prayed, groped and hoped, and meditated; until out of the abundance of their spiritual and physical and mental living they meet their "Giant Hours" as if they had always expected just such great events to happen.

There is no such thing as luck in the ministry.

They began to refer to a certain young man as "Lucky Lindy," and that young man protested to the reporters against the use of that phrase. I do not blame him. He was not lucky. He had spent long years planning and dreaming that hop to Paris. In the months and weeks immediately preceding that hop he had worked night and day studying navigation, weather charts, winds, storms, gasoline, oils, resistance, induction compasses. Even the very night before, he had stayed up half the night making last-minute preparations. There was no such thing as luck in that trip—nor since. His career since then proves that. He was ready when his hour came. That was the single secret of that great event in Lindbergh's life.

I read a while ago, in a discussion of Pasteur, that, while many of the great scientific discoveries have come by chance, "chance always favors the trained mind."

Vachel Lindsay has a quattrain that I like to quote:

> "I wish that I had learned by heart
> Some lyrics read that day;
> I knew not 'twas a Giant Hour
> That soon would pass away."

Every preacher, whether he be a student preacher or an old veteran of the church, down deep in his soul is always looking for his "Giant Hour." It may be the day he is called on in a sudden emergency; it may be the day that he is called back to his

college commencement to speak; it may be the day he is called back to make a speech and receive a degree. We all have our "Great Events" and our "Giant Hours." The younger we are, the more eagerly we expect them. We are consciously or subconsciously looking forward to that "Big Chance" or to that "Big Church." These words all symbolize something that heaves itself up like a Mount Everest in the dim and misty future. Whatever that hour is, or whenever it is, we want to be ready for it; we want to have it said of us as it was said of Lincoln, "Lincoln was the lord of his event."

Even if we do not go back into prehistoric ancestry, as the psychologists suggest, to start in on our training for that Great Hour, we ought, at least, to start in ten years before that hour comes, at least as far back as college days, to get ready. A preacher ought to be getting ready to preach ten years before he writes a sermon. Indeed, many do. Indeed, all of us do in a very real sense.

He ought to be sermonizing during college days, even if he does not have a regular church. The earlier he starts to reading, and praying, and traveling, and living with sermonizing in mind the greater preacher he will become.

Let us take the challenge of Addison's "Cato" as a slogan for our ministerial preparation:

> "'Tis not in mortals to command success;
> But we'll do more, Sempronius: we'll deserve it!"

Meaning what, as applied to this thesis? Meaning this: That we'll deserve that "Giant Hour" when it comes.

I. Getting Ready for the "Giant Hour" in Athletics

Falling on the ball is not pleasant, but it is necessary.

The first thing a good coach does in September is to make his men fall on the ball for two weeks at the beginning of every practice period. He knows that many a game is won or lost because a man can fall on the ball promptly. He knows also that that falling on the ball will train a man to keep his eye on the ball.

No man likes to do this drudge work, but it has to be done. The men who do it the most faithfully are the men who make the spectacular plays in mid-season; they are the men of whom the newspapers speak when they say, "*Jones won the game to-day by catching a fumbled ball on the first bound and loping off down the field for a touchdown.*"

It is the same in golf. The drudgery of practice hours day after day; just the simple learning to keep an eye on that little white ball—that is the Alpha and Omega of successful golf as any Dub will tell you. But most "Dubs" refuse to do the drudge work that will make it possible to star as a golfer. The men who have become great golfers have been caddies and boys and men who have

practiced on the drudge work of golf for untold and innumerable hours getting ready for—something—for some great day.

Lindbergh cannot be turned aside from his profession. They offer him vast sums to go into pictures, and he answers, "I'm an aviator!" They offer him fine business positions, and he says, "I'm an aviator!" He keeps his eye on the ball. He will not be drawn aside from his vocation.

We go to college, and we do everything else except the thing that we went to college to do. We represent the fraternity in athletics, in social life, in oratory, and debate. If we have any time left over, we study. Why doesn't some genius teach us that we might possibly do all of these things? But the general temper of college life as it is lived to-day is that we must do the outside things and let the studies go until the last. If there is any time that is left, well and good. But we must not let the studies interfere with college life.

This spirit and this attitude carry over into our ministerial lives. We do and we are expected to do everything but the thing that we are ordained and that we are called to do. We are social secretaries, we are business managers, we are financial agents, we are advertising experts, we are politicians, we are committeemen on the Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions, and the Masons. We aim for everything but our real goal, which is preaching. But now and then a wise man centers on preaching, and then the rest of us

wonder how he got to the top so quickly and why it is that he is called to colleges, conventions, and conferences to preach. He has done the drudge work, he has kept his eye on the ball; he has gotten ready for the "Giant Hour."

II. Getting Ready for the Big Church in the Little Church

The small church is the chance for study and reading, quiet and meditation, and sermonizing. It is the "Wilderness" of John and Jesus and all of the great prophets and preachers. If a man takes advantage of these quieter days when he is beginning, he will do much to get his soul and his mind ready for the larger opportunities when they come.

There is a chance to read there. There is a chance to commune with nature and to mingle with people. In every small town and church the human beings are exactly the same as they are in the larger church and city. He will get to know certain universal types and know them well, and he will, to the end of his days, refer to them. He will say: "I find old Jake Simpson the cynic, and Mother Jones who always loved to entertain the preachers, and Aunt Sallie who was the preacher's critic and told him how the preacher before him did things; I find the Chief Official who likes to take a prominent place in the Sunday service, but who will not pay to the church regularly; I find them all in the big church as I did in the small church."

The small church in the small town is a library; it is a laboratory in methods and humanity. What will work there will work anywhere. The wise minister will preach, read, and write in a small church as if he were in a large one.

"This church is too small for our preacher; we'll not be able to keep him long," is all right for the preacher's admirers to say, and even to think; but it is a bad thought for the preacher himself to get into his thinking. It is even worse for him to say. Even if he thinks it, he had better keep that unholy thought to himself.

The most successful preachers I know were in no hurry to leave their small churches. They had an intuitive knowledge that they were getting ready for something and that there was no hurry about it.

One day Mr. Clay Doss, head of the Ford Motor Works in Kansas City, said to me about our mutual friend: "I got a queer wire from Mr. Ford to-day. He said he wanted some Rattlesnake oil right away."

"What did you do?"

"I wired to Oklahoma and told an old fellow I know there to get me some. I don't know what the Boss wants with Rattlesnake oil. He may want it, and he may not. He may just be sending me on a 'Message to Garcia.' But, whatever it is, I'm going to be ready for him. He'll have it in two days."

I think that that perhaps accounts for the reason why Mr. Clay Doss is one of the most trusted

executives in the Ford organization: he leaves no details unturned to be ready for anything.

III. The Fragrance Comes in the Fullness of Time

Dr. Black, in "The Mystery of Preaching," has a paragraph that sums up all that I am trying to say in this chapter about getting the mind and body and soul ready for one's "Giant Hour" in the Church.

He says: "Each winter I grow daffodil bulbs in bowls in my study. I have watched them growing, shooting up their spike-like leaves and flower stalks. And yet, never until the flower naturally expanded have I ever caught any hint of scent. Then, in a flash, it arrives like a benediction and sprays my room with fragrance. This is the hope I hold out for all of us who are steadily growing. One day, as the flower opens, the scent will come. It is the day of our mastery. But its secret lies deep in the long, slow growth of the dark winter."

Mr. Edwin Markham tells me that every verse of his immortal "The Man with the Hoe," save the first verse, came out of the brooding of his subconscious self after a night of sleep; and that when it came in the dawn, at his awakening hour, he leaped out of his bed and wrote the verses down dawn after dawn. So come the great sermons, the unforgettable sermons; so come those creative epics of poetry and prophecy which make us immortal in the life of our city and the hearts of our fellow men.

They come after brooding, after wide living, and reading, and loving, and suffering, and dreaming, and meditating, and praying.

It may be years before they come. Long winters and summers of prayer and thought may have to prelude the great classics and the "Giant Hours"; but then, in good time, the great chance, and the great church, and the great hour will come.

During his years in the Wilderness, during his hours of preparation, he could well adopt the spirit of John Burroughs's poem, "Waiting," as the covenant of his life:

"Serene, I fold my hands and wait,
Nor care for wind or tide or sea;
I rave no more 'gainst time or fate,
For lo! mine own shall come to me.

I stay my haste, I make delays,
For what avails this eager pace?
I stand amid the eternal ways,
And what is mine shall know my face.

Asleep, awake, by night or day,
The friends I seek are seeking me;
No wind can drive my bark astray,
Nor change the tide of destiny.

What matter if I stand alone?
I wait with joy the coming years;
My heart shall reap what it has sown
And garner up its fruit of tears.

The waters know their own and draw
The brook that springs in yonder height;
So flows the good with equal law
Unto the soul of pure delight.

The stars come nightly to the sky;
The tidal wave unto the sea;
Nor time, nor space, nor deep, nor high
Can keep my own away from me."

Growth precedes glory.
Climbing precedes climax.
Preparation precedes the peaks.

CHAPTER VI

ASSEMBLING AND TRANSFORMING THE RAW PRODUCTS FOR PREACHING

In order to give the impression of an overflow in preaching we must assemble large accumulations of raw products from which to choose in writing sermons.

In the River Rouge plant of the Ford Motor Company near Detroit, one winter day I stood on the top of a blast furnace with two or three Ford executives, who were showing me over the new works.

The winter wind was howling, but not loud enough to drown the roar of the machinery as the great "skip" which carried raw materials up the incline thundered its groaning way to the top, loaded with exactly the proper mixture of limestone and iron ore to dump into that yawning, waiting mouth of the "blast."

We heard and saw it dumped; caught the whiff of deadly gases, against which we were warned; saw the flare of flame; heard the hiss and roar, and the creak of machinery as the great "skip" slid back down its incline to be loaded once again from two great piles—mountain-like piles—of limestone and iron ore.

"Look back there!" directed one of the Ford

executives, pointing his hand toward four huge mountains of what looked like dirt to me.

"What are they?" I asked him.

"Over in that far pile is lumber from the Ford Michigan forests. That pile next to it is rock which we use in the blasts (limestone). In that third pile is iron ore from the Ford mines, and that pile next to it is a mountain of coal from the Ford mines in Kentucky."

These four great piles of raw products, all of them from the Ford resources, were close enough to us to throw a stone into easily. They loomed like huge mountains. I asked the executive how much coal there was in the coal pile.

"Five hundred thousand tons now; but we will pile a million tons before the year is over, and it all comes from our own mines."

"That is a miracle," added the executive.

"What do you mean—miracle?" I asked him.

"I mean that those four piles of raw products are transformed into a single commodity which brings bread and butter and independence to about fifty thousand families here, and for hundreds of thousands of people all over the United States."

Then he pointed to a snake-like procession about a quarter of a mile away directly in front of us and said, "Do you see that procession, that moving line of vehicles over there directly in front of us?"

"Yes; what are they?"

"They are automobiles and tractors. Those four

piles of limestone, iron ore, coal, and lumber have been turned into automobiles between here and there—and all within the space of two days. They go from raw products into automobiles in two days. We take that pile of dirty iron ore, and that pile of coal and limestone, dump them into that 'blast,' turning them into molten and running but controlled iron liquid. That is run into the foundry there in front of the 'blast.' It is made into motors and bodies there. In the next building in a direct line in front of you the wood is planed and turned into bodies, and the car assembled in the fourth unit directly in front of you on a straight line."

He was right. There they were, four great piles of raw materials, just back of us at our feet from where we stood on the top of that great "blast" furnace: iron ore, limestone, coal, and lumber. It looked like a mountain range; gaunt, grimy, and raw—dirty and elemental; elemental as the crater of a volcano.

To me it was a parable of sermon writing; a symbol of assembling the material for sermon writing.

In some such efficient, although not so mechanical, a way ought the material for sermon writing to be assembled from the ends of the earth.

To manufacture any automobile requires the help of the whole earth. The rubber must come from South America or the Malay States of Java; the various parts of the machinery must be assembled

from all over the United States. Human beings from all European countries, negroes from the Southland, coming north at the rate of fifty thousand a year; Chinese, Koreans, Mexicans; men of every race and color help to put that machine together.

In this particular industry it so happens that, for the sake of efficiency, Mr. Ford owns his own mines, his own forests, his own limestone, his own aluminum mines, his own rubber plantations, his own coal mines, his own water supply, his own ships to transport his raw products, and his own railroads.

The analogy is good. So ought it to be with the preacher who sits down to write out a sermon. It is not a process of assembling at the manufacturing end. It is a process of combining, and mixing, and putting together with skill, and heat, and heart. It is a process of reaching behind you in your compact library for just the right book and the indexed illustration, never outside of reach. It is a process of sitting in your study, before your typewriter or with your pen, and having at hand, before you begin, the raw material out of which a sermon is made.

The four great piles of raw material might be called: Books, Illustrations, Experience, Travel. These piles could be continued indefinitely. There might be piles of Poetry, Art, Music, Science, History, Archæology, Sculpture, Biography, Fiction, indexed newspaper clippings, magazine clippings, and notebooks—gathered from the ends of

the earth. But the important thing is that there *be* such an accumulation of the stuff out of which sermons are made.

Then, to carry the analogy further, these must all be dumped into the furnace of the human mind and heart; they must go through the process of fire and passion; and then pour out as molten streams of pity, mercy, love, service, eloquence, appeal, inspiration. That is the function of the personality which turns these raw materials into the flowing molten metal of fire and passion and feeling.

One ought to have all of his materials, brought from the ends of the earth in one's own transportation system, in one's own Dream Ships, in one's own camel trains, and airships, and railroads, and Magic Carpets; one ought to have them so well indexed and so close at hand that one does not have to stop the process of manufacturing to search for a single item that is needed.

It ought to be a continuous process. That is the genius of great sermon writing. The sermon ought to be begun and finished at one sitting. That will give it a sense of continuity and unity.

The fires in the Ford blast furnace were started as the plaque indicates on Monday, May 17, 1920, and they have never died out. They have never died out, because there is always something to feed into them. The process of making steel must be a continuous process. So ought the process of making a sermon.

The material ought to be so abundantly and so carefully assembled that the actual process of writing it may be continuous.

Mr. Ford is an ingenious fellow. He has had the River Rouge widened and deepened so that his ships from the ends of the earth may dock their raw material within fifty feet of the "blast." He has run his railroads up so close that one dumping into that iron ore pile is enough. In few words, his raw products are within reach of the furnace through which they must go. The "skip," which corresponds in our analogy to the hand, reaches down and grabs a load of ore, and then a load of coal, and then a load of limestone; just as the hand and heart ought to be able to reach from the desk on which a sermon is written for a book, a poem, an experience, a card index, without moving from one's seat. I am the furnace, my hand is the "skip," and my mind is the furnace through which these great accumulations of raw materials must pass.

When a man sits down to write a sermon, first of all, he ought to know what kind of a product he wants to turn out. He ought to be writing to fit the needs of a certain group which will assemble at his church. He ought to know their needs as distinctive from some other group. And he ought to manufacture his sermons with his own group in mind; just as certain automobile manufacturers make Fords, and Lincolns, and Packards, to suit the tastes, cul-

ture, and financial needs and desires of certain distinctive groups.

His outline will help him as the blue prints help the manufacturer. Therefore, with a good outline before him, and his raw material assembled, he ought to be able to sit down and finish his sermon at one sitting in a continuous process, so that there need be no welding of parts, no broken edges, no disconnected divisions and subdivisions.

As I sit down to write a sermon, the books which I have read on a certain theme—what I call my "working books"— are all within reach of my typewriter. My poetry is between the book-ends on the top of my desk. I can reach for it without rising from my seat. My card index in a steel cabinet is at my right, and I do not need to leave my chair to get what I want. My biography, indexed and marked, is to my left within reach. There is nothing that I need for a particular sermon theme which is not assembled and close enough to me to reach when I once sit down to write. I am like a woman in a kitchen. I want everything within reach before I start to work. I am not lazy. I try to be efficient. I do not want to break the continuity of the production of a sermon. Therefore, I assemble my raw material out of which a sermon is to be made; I assemble it from the ends of the earth. I bring it in my own Ships of Travel from everywhere, and I dock it where I can reach for it. I try not to have to go down town to the library for an illustration or

an idea which I want to use. I try to have my illustrations close at hand, that they might be said to have been brought on my own railroad of experience right up to the spot where I will need them. I want an abundance of raw material, and I want it close at hand. I want to pour it into the furnace of my creative fires and see it come out a finished product from where I sit. I want to follow the outline or the blue prints which I have already made so that there will be no hitch in the manufacture of that sermon.

You may smile, but the analogy is good. You may say: "I am not making a Ford. I am making a Lincoln."

All right, make a Lincoln, if that is what your market or your audience needs—if that fits their culture. There are Methodists and Baptists. I heard Secretary Hughes tell a story of a discussion between two negroes as to their church affiliations. They were discussing the difference between Baptists and Methodists. Sam had never heard of a Baptist. He said: "I ain't never heard o' no Babtists. I never heard of nothin' but Methodists. What is a Babtist, Rastus?"

Rastus replied, "Well, Sam, a Babtist is a Methodist dat's got a' education, I guess!"

The need may be different, but the process is the same; just as is the process of making a Ford and a Lincoln car. They are both made out of the same steel. The same "blast" furnace fires and trans-

forms the same steel. They both come from the same—exactly the same—raw material. They are both fired by the same passion and love. It takes the same love to win the heart of a college professor as it does to win the heart of a tramp. The same basic appeals and the same fundamental needs are there. There may be a difference in the way the preacher dresses himself and the way he finishes his product; but the deep, human, emotional appeal is the same with all humanity.

When my guide had finished showing me that marvelous perfection, that transformation of the material of the great piles of raw products into automobiles within two days; when I had looked just back of me at those piles of iron ore, coal, limestone, and lumber, and then had turned face about and saw that long line of cars running out of the factory on their own wheels, I exclaimed, "I tell you this isn't industry, it's romance."

My guide added, "It's more than industry or romance—it's a miracle!"

"What do you mean?" I asked him.

"Do you remember the miracle of the loaves and the fishes?

"Being a preacher, I do," I said with a smile.

"Then there are the mountains of raw materials. They have been transformed into automobiles before your very eyes—but into more: they have been transformed into food for little children; and these particular 'loaves and fishes' will feed a

hundred thousand people and more to-day and every day."

I cannot forget the good sense of his analogy.

And into what are the piles, the bookcases, the index system, the shelves of biography and poetry, the notebooks of travel and college class room actually transformed, as we write sermons, efficiently and with heat and passion, pouring them through the fires of our souls in molten running streams? The answer is: They are transformed into sermons, and these in turn into deeds of service, sacrifice, and transformed lives; into revolutions, laboratory work; and into spiritual food for humanity.

The process of assembling raw products and of writing a sermon is a mechanical process at best. Therefore I feel that my analogy is good. I take the analogy of a mechanically perfect process and an efficient plan. But it is run through fire. So ought our process to be. It comes out white-hot, and with its own moving power within itself. It gets some place. It works. It goes. It gets results. So ought ours.

If we have plenty of the raw products of reading, illustration, experience, Bible knowledge, and human interest ever at our finger tips, when we sit down to create our sermons we shall have a chance to select "the finest of the wheat," and our sermons will have that richness which reveals an overflow of material out of which to choose.

CHAPTER VII

THE IMPACT OF A COMPACT SERMON

"I WOULD write shorter editorials, but I haven't time," Horace Greeley used to say.

There is a fine impact in a compact sermon, as we have all discovered.

When people can go away from a church saying, "That man is prodigal in his generosity; he had enough material in that sermon to make ten sermons, but it was clear and forceful, unhurried, and yet as swift as lightning," that man has achieved.

When a man lives from mouth to mouth, and from day to day, he is not able to leave this impression; but when he is preaching out of a wide reading, a wide experience, a wide knowledge of humanity, a deep love and spiritual living, he leaves the impression of an overflowing dam, as if there was an unusual richness somewhere from which he was drawing.

In this chapter I want to discuss the text first of all, for the text and its place in a sermon have much to do with both the impact and the compactness of it.

I. THE TECHNIQUE OF THE TEXT

"Are you ready? On your mark! Get set! Go!" is the formula of the starter in the one-hundred-yard dash.

That ought to be the spirit of the text. It ought to have the impact of the gun fired by the man who starts the college racers.

Webster says, "A text is a verse or passage of Scripture, especially one chosen as the subject of a sermon, or in proof of a doctrine."

Webster cites as synonyms for "text": "Hence anything chosen as the subject of an argument, literary composition or the like; a theme, or topic or subject."

Webster also calls attention to "text-type," which originated because it was the custom to write the "text" in a large handwriting with heavier letters; in what printers call "upper case type."

The text is the starting point, and therefore it ought to be used as such and not as a place to linger and loaf and interpret, and "*Mammie Palaver.*"

We find texts for sermons in the Bible. As I have said elsewhere, this gives the note of authority to a sermon. Even if the sermon is topical, the text ought to be chosen from the Bible.

As I have intimated, texts may be found in the poetry of the world. They may be found in the great utterances of great men and history. Texts may be taken from the sayings of the common people. Alice in Wonderland was sitting on a bench, and she had just eaten a wafer that made her grow. She grew so fast that she was pushing the queen off the bench on which they were sitting. The queen asked Alice what she was doing, and she said, "I'm just

growing." The queen replied, "Well, you can't grow in here!"

There is a text in that phrase, even though it does not come from the Bible.

In the chapter on the use of books in preaching I have called attention to the impact and power of single great lines in prose and poetry, and I refer to that chapter in this part of the discussion on the technique of the text. A well-chosen text from great single sentences of history, art, and literature is well now and then for the sake of variety.

To sum up: We find texts in the Bible, in the sayings of great men, in the great sentences of history, poetry, and prose, and in the sayings of the common people. The newspapers are good sources for the sayings of the common people. Will Rogers always takes his texts from the newspapers, as does Arthur Brisbane, both of whom are preachers to the American people in widely different ways and fields. We might, at least, learn from them the art of compactness, brevity, and human interest.

Both of these preachers have perfected the art of taking texts from everyday happenings, and both have perfected the art of the impact of compactness.

"Stick to your text when you take one," is a voice from the pew. There is nothing more quickly noted by an audience, even by children, than the preacher who takes a text and then departs from it, or "dispenses with it."

"Textualism," says Webster, "is rigid adherence to the letter of the text-literalism."

In that sense we preachers must be "literalists" at least. We must adhere strictly to our text. We must not allow ourselves to drift from the main thought. We must go toward our objective from that text as an arrow goes to its mark.

What is a text good for after the sermon starts?

Answer: Its repetition serves to keep the main thought in the mind of the listener. The power of repetition is a psychological force known to all wise preachers.

The text is like a silver thread that binds the texture of the fabric of a sermon into a whole.

The text is a guide-post pointing the way to some objective, to some destination.

The text is a nail to hang thoughts on.

There is a fine technique in the methods of developing a text.

Some texts have but a single thought in them. That is good. Such a text is like a sword thrust to the heart.

Some texts have several thoughts in them. I doubt the wisdom of using such texts, but I heard a bishop in the Methodist Church preach on the following text divided in exactly the way I have indicated:

"All things work together for good to them that love God."

Division I
"All things *work.*"
Division II
"All things work—*together.*"
Division III
"All things work together—*for good.*"
Division IV
"All things work together for good—*to them that love God!*"

There seems to be some logic in this method of developing a text; enough at least for a Methodist bishop to have used it.

Sometimes we use an entire chapter for a text; the story of a book like Hosea, or Ruth, or Job. There is a fine technique in the use of this type of a text.

Men often use certain outstanding characters of the Bible as the text for a sermon, such as Moses, David, John the Baptist, John of Patmos, and make what I have referred to as a biographical sermon out of that treatment.

A text should always lead to something, like a rifle shot at a bull's eye. It should always be on the way some place, and it should not linger long in any one spot in the sermon. The text should always be calling the preacher back and calling the congregation back to the thought and the heart of the sermon; and when you get to the final destination the text should always be with you. It must not have gotten lost on the way to the objective.

I was one night driving a truck toward the front lines. I came to a crossroads which went four different directions. I did not dare to have the lights on my truck lighted. We were too near the German lines. I stopped my truck, got down, and crossed over to a wayside shrine, at the bottom of which were directions written. But that night as I flashed my small light on that crucifix I read these lines in French: "Traveler, hast thou ever seen so great a grief as mine?" That, I take it, was a good text for a sermon. Down below that text were the directions I was looking for. Those directions told me the way to go. Wherein is a Parable for the Technique of the Text in a sermon.

II. The Fine Art of the Start and the Finish of a Sermon

A text and a sermon ought to have something of the sense of the value of time that one has in writing a telegram; or, better, that one has in a wireless conversation these days to London from the United States.

That sense of compactness in a text and a sermon will give an impact to a sermon which it does not now have.

Ian Maclaren in "The Cure of Souls" says: "Very likely an introduction must be written, or else the minister could not get further; but it ought then to be burned as having served its purpose. It is really getting up steam, and there is no use in in-

viting passengers on board till the vessel is ready to start."

I am interested in introductions to sermons. I doubt, as does Dr. Maclaren (Watson), if they are necessary.

I liked—and all America liked—the way President Hoover stepped into his Inaugural Address and into the prohibition question on March 4, without any preliminaries, without any introduction.

He was like a certain boxer I once saw box. He astonished his opponent with his technique. Ordinarily, according to all traditions of the boxing ring, the boxers have to "shadow box" a few minutes, to dance around the ring, before they really get down to work. But this particular lightweight didn't waste any time on preliminaries. The minute the gong sounded he stepped into his astonished and bewildered opponent and "landed" on his chin.

Each round this unusual fellow did the same thing. His opponent did not seem to be able to adjust himself to such unorthodox procedure. Each round took him completely by surprise. While he was maneuvering around, "shadow boxing," prancing and dancing about, his opponent had hit him without preliminaries.

The minister who will adopt a new technique in introductions, the same technique that President Herbert Hoover used in his Inaugural Address, the same technique that my friend the boxer used—eliminate the "shadow boxing," eliminate prancing

and dancing, and get started at once—that preacher will win the heart of his audience.

There is a fine art in a good start—which means in the introduction, or lack of introduction.

An editor will tell the preacher that a good short story or novel ought to catch the reader's heart in the first sentence. The old-time newspaper editor will say: "Tell your story in the first paragraph and then amplify it from then on; but tell it in the first paragraph."

They say of a runner, "He got the jump on the gun." That's what a sermon introduction ought to do. It ought to "get the jump on the audience."

To tell the why of the sermon, from whence it came, where the idea came from, a brief interpretation of the text, with its Biblical setting, is enough of an introduction for the ordinary sermon.

Little time should be wasted on the introduction.

From the introduction, plunge into the treatment and application of the idea you wish to convey to your audience, and then when you have covered that idea and applied it to life, making it fit into the needs of what Dr. Fosdick calls "large areas of your congregation," then hurry to your conclusion.

A race ought to be started with a spurt and finished with a spurt. So ought a sermon.

Keep something for the end of your race. Let there be a crack like the crack of a whip at the end; an unforgettable story, dialogue, picture, poem, parable, symbol.

The day of the old-time peroration, with long-sustained sentences, is through. In this radio age we have no time for useless words, for sustained climaxes. The climax must be summed up in a word, in a sentence. Sermons lose nothing by this demand.

Have a finish not only like the crack of a whip, but like the ringing of a bell when "the melody lingers on," or like a trumpet blast.

Preachers may learn much from O. Henry or Kipling or Poe short stories on the fine art of the start, the development, and the conclusion of a sermon. Study these short-story writers for this technique.

Bad terminal facilities spoil many a preacher and many a sermon.

Dr. James Black in "The Mystery of Preaching" quotes Holmes as saying: "Don't you know how hard it is for some people to get out of a room after their visit is really over? They want to be off, and you want them to be off, but they don't know how to manage it. One would think that they had been built into your parlor or study and were waiting to be launched like a ship."

So it seems with the ending of some sermons. The speaker doesn't seem to know how to quit. He will make that most abominable of all pulpit utterances: "Just a few more minutes now," or "I won't detain you much longer," or "I know it is getting late, but bear with me for a few more seconds."

Every such utterance is a psychological admission of defeat. Let no man presume to use such expressions in the pulpit. When he feels like saying such things let him in God's name stop his sermon and pronounce the benediction.

One humorist friend of mine says, "I don't mind an audience looking at their watches, but what I hate is to see them hold their watches up to their ears to see if they are still running."

My father used to say, "Always go away from the table a little hungry."

That is good advice for a preacher, "Always send your audience away wishing that you had gone on a little longer rather than wishing you had stopped a little sooner." It is an old saying, "Few souls are saved after twenty minutes of preaching." Don't forget that "sleep is an opinion."

There ought to be a sense of climax in a sermon just as there is in a good drama.

III. How Long Ought a Sermon to Be These Days?

I have suggested the length of a sermon in the preceding paragraphs.

In Scotland and early New England they used to run for hours. Cotton Mather used to say, "Come back this afternoon and hear the rest of this sermon."

But to-day we are in an age of "flashes" and "pictures." The newspaper tells its stories in "flashes,"

and the motion picture world tells its story in "titles." Ten years may pass in a single sentence. In the days of long sermons there were no "news reels." The pulpit was the newspaper, the university, the town hall, the social forum. But no more. We live in days of radios, automobiles, pictures, talkies, speed—and the expectation of brevity—and the sermon must meet the need of the hour.

Brevity is not only the soul of wit, but it is also the soul of the sermon.

One preacher whom I know has preached in a certain great American city—namely, Buffalo, N. Y.—and has built up a reputation as a "Twenty-Minute-Sermon Preacher." It works. "I would write shorter editorials, but I haven't time." I quote again in connection with Dr. Bruce Wright's method. It is no sign of carelessness that a man may write and preach short sermons; quite the opposite.

We have developed a "One-Hour Service" in Copley Methodist Church. It runs from eleven to twelve, without a minute over. That is done because we believe that it fits in with the spirit of this day and because we believe that it is pragmatic. It works. We get as much into a service as the average New England service—which has an hour of preliminaries—gets in. The average church service is killed with "preliminaries" before the preacher gets a chance to preach. This one-hour service gives us a half hour for the sermon, and I have found that, if I

myself have worked enough on that sermon, leaving out unnecessary things, that is time enough.

The young bride was weeping at supper. The cake tasted so badly that the groom could not eat it. They both were embarrassed. The bride cried out, "I don't know what I could have left out of that cake, dear."

The groom replied, "Darling, it is nothing that you *left out* that makes it taste that badly."

So it is with a sermon. It is not what we leave out that spoils a sermon. It is what we put in—and what we refuse to leave out.

Magazines to-day are saying at the heads of their short stories, "Twenty minutes' reading time for this story." One magazine is specializing in "The Short Short Story." An old editor used to say to cub reporters who complained that they couldn't shorten up their stories, "The story of the Crucifixion was told in less than a hundred words, boy!" Study the Lord's Prayer, the Sermon on the Mount, the Parables of Jesus, the Magna Charta, the Gettysburg Address, Lincoln's letters, if you want to know the possibilities and power of brevity. If preachers would only set aside the implied egotism of long sermons and model their public utterances after Jesus and Paul and Lincoln, they would draw larger crowds to hear them. There is no virtue in length, as the famous Edward Everett must now know if he looks down on us from the heavenly heights and sees that his two-hour speech at Gettys-

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burg is forgotten, while Lincoln's brief utterances live forever.

Gamaliel Bradford in "Life and I" says: "Chadwick used to tell his pupils when they got to working nervously over their music, 'Never finish a thing after it is done!'"

What glorious advice for a preacher in his sermon writing and delivery, "Never finish a thing after it is done!"

The editor uses his blue pencil to improve a story and not to hurt it.

The sculptor uses his chisel to make a statue beautiful and not to injure it.

The tree trimmer trims the tree to improve it and beautify it and make it bear better fruit.

Selection is the art and heart of old Mother Nature—trained for centuries to carry on an evolution from which higher life develops.

The potter tears off and throws away as much clay as he uses, and more, in order that he may make a beautiful vase.

Luther Burbank threw away a million daisies in order to perfect a splendid great white snowball of a Shasta daisy.

"Berries for the king's plate" are carefully culled from the available berries, and only the best are kept for the king.

Have one illustration, one idea, and one goal for your sermon. Throw away all but the exact text, the exact illustration, the exact symbol that will fit

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your objective. Jesus was as direct as an arrow or a sword-thrust in his preaching.

So ought it to be with modern sermonizing. There is a tremendous impact in a compact sermon.

Out of such a use of text introduction, body, and conclusion in a sermon, comes a feeling to an audience that there has been an abundance of material to choose from, but that this preacher has chosen "berries for the king's plate"; he has culled and chosen, and thrown away all but the richest, choicest illustrations, and that he had brought only "the finest of the wheat" to that audience.

A proper discipline in text, introduction, body, and conclusion of the sermon, such as this chapter treats, will give the feeling that a preacher is preaching out of a great, deep overflow.

CHAPTER VIII

VARIETY IN THE VEHICLES OF PREACHING

A REAL golfer has a variety of clubs in his bag. He uses each one of these clubs for a specific purpose. He knows just which club to use, and the value of his game depends largely upon knowing when to use a specific club. This also adds spice to the game. It is a monotonous game when played with two or three clubs.

If a harpist tried to play on two or three strings, when he had a dozen or more strings available, we would call that "harping on one string," and everybody would know just what we meant.

I have watched with a good deal of interest the versatility of great actors. I have watched Miss Ethel Barrymore, for instance, shift her plays two and three times in a single year. I have seen her go from playing the part of an old nun into the part of a young girl within two weeks. I have also seen her play three parts in one play—namely, "The Kingdom of God," where she starts out as a young girl in the first act, plays the part of a mature woman in the second, and the part of an old hunchbacked nun in the last act.

I have never been able to afford but one automo-

bile; but I have often looked into the garage of some of my more wealthy friends and have seen their "town cars" and "country cars," their "sports cars" and their "winter cars," their open cars and their closed cars—each for a specific season or purpose. It is lovely to have a specific car for a specific season or reason. I am perfectly happy to have just one car. I find that I get along well with just one car. This one vehicle meets all of my needs. But I would feel badly handicapped if I had just one sermon-vehicle through which to preach, in the light of the fact that the same audience has to listen to me about one hundred and fifty times a year, including a prayer meeting sermon each week.

The curse of the sermon is monotony. One way, at least, that we can give variety to preaching is by developing a variety of mediums or vehicles through which we preach. The old, deadly, monotonous, "Firstly, secondly, thirdly," etc., may be all right now and then, but deadly if it is used every week.

The great sin of the preacher is monotony.

We must shun even the very appearance of that evil in our pulpit presentations.

To that end in this chapter I want to suggest a group of types of homiletics which will give the feeling to an audience that we are preaching not only out of the overflow of health, happiness, energy, ideas, religious experience, and creative ability, but that we are also preaching out of an overflow of

method and medium; that we have more than one vehicle to get to our destination.

I. The Symphonic Sermon Theme

In brief, this homiletic method is simply the linking up of the idea of the text with a two-line couplet and running a repetition of this couplet through the sermon. It originated in the symphony itself.

Years ago I noticed that a symphony has a theme running through it. That musical theme is repeated in the cellos, the violins, the harps, the flutes, and even echoed in the drum. If you watch for it, you can hear it running like a soft ripple of water through the composition. Then it will burst forth like the wind in the trees; then like a mighty clap of thunder. Then softly like the whine of a lost autumn it will whisper and weep in the distance—tragic with color and melancholy.

The symphonic theme idea has in it that powerful psychology of repetition. Anything humorous repeated several times on a stage will convulse an audience. I remember a vaudeville team repeating a phrase: "Look at that hat! Look at that hat!" now in disgust as it fell from one member's head; then in the spirit of fun; then in semi-anger: "Look at that hat! Look at that hat!" Finally the audience which smiled at first was convulsed with laughter at the impact of that repetition.

The same psychology works in the repetition of a more serious and reverent truth if that repetition is

done sincerely and reverently. There is psychological power and impact in repetition. Dr. Luccock writes me that he has found good authority for my symphonic theme idea, for Alice in Wonderland says, "Anything I tell you three times is true."

The language of the spiritual is poetry and rhythm. The whole world of nature and of humanity moves in a beautiful vibration of rhythm, and so does humanity.

I want to illustrate the possibilities of this symphonic theme idea by a sermon which I call "The Everlastings of God." My text for this sermon is Psalm 90: 2: "From everlasting to everlasting, thou art God." The symphonic theme is:

> "Hammer away, ye hostile hands!
> Your hammers break; God's anvil stands!"

What I want to say to my audience through that sermon is that God's great moral and spiritual movements are timeless and impregnable. I illustrate what I mean by the movement of Democracy, the Abolition of Slavery, the Prohibition Movement, the Rock of Ages we call the Bible, the Church. Men are always "Blasting at the Rock of Ages," but the things of God are everlasting:

> "Hammer away, ye hostile hands!
> Your hammers break; God's anvil stands!"

For "from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God!"

A repetition of this text and symphonic theme

after every major illustration and after every division of the sermon makes an impact of an idea, a swing of rhythmic music which fascinates an audience. Several of America's most distinguished clergymen have reported to me that they have found this vehicle a fascinating one both to preacher and audience—namely, such men as Dr. Burris Jenkins, Dr. Frederick Shannon, and Dr. Elwood Rowsey.

II. The Drama Sermon

This particular method of approach to preaching I have set forth more minutely and illustrated more profusely in several books; so I shall not develop its description any more minutely here. It is merely one of the vehicles of preaching which gives variety to any pulpit. It is not set forth as a method to use every week, although I have found that it is popular and strong enough to use several times in a month.

This vehicle of approach is what its name suggests. It is a method which takes a drama as the background of a sermon, runs the play act by act, and uses the entire vehicle as a background for whatever spiritual teaching the preacher has to deliver.

There are abundant dramas available from Greece to England; there are great modern dramas of a spiritual and of a distinctly Christian preachment which may be used. "The Passing of the Third Floor Back," "The Servant in the House," "The Miracle," great motion pictures like "The Way of All Flesh," "Seventh Heaven," "Ben Hur," etc., all

carry a spiritual meaning and message. I have illustrated this medium and method in several books which I have published in recent years, the most recent of which is "*The High Faith of Fiction and Drama.*" I do not know of any more appealing approach to a Sunday evening congregation than through the Drama Sermon. People are already fascinated by the theater, the drama, the motion picture. Then why should not we, who preach the great good news, bring it to people through a method which we already know is pragmatic? Each week we see the theater attracting its millions every day in the week, while the church attracts its meager thousands one day a week. Humanity has an instinct which responds to the dramatic. Every child lives in a world of drama. A child acts all day long. Within ten minutes a child, playing alone in a room, will be a pirate, a mother, a father, an aviator, a school-teacher, a preacher, a policeman, a robber, a singer, an actor, a tramp. There is deeply buried in most human beings something that responds to a dramatic approach in preaching. Again I say that this is not to be used as an exclusive vehicle, to the exclusion of other types of homiletics, but that it is to be added to what I might call the preacher's repertoire, for the sake of variety.

III. The Dramatic Book Sermon

The Dramatic Book Sermon differs from the Drama Sermon.

What I choose to call the Drama Sermon deals with dramas alone. The Dramatic Book Sermon is a type of homiletics which takes any book—biography, fiction, non-fiction, scientific, psychological, historical—and uses it as the background of a sermon. There is an infinite variety in the use of this medium of preaching. One finds, after a while, that the whole field of fiction and non-fiction presents a most fascinating group of books. Take such a book as "The Fool in Christ," or Dr. Pupin's "The New Reformation," Bojor's "The Power of a Lie," "The Great Hunger," and use them as the background of a sermon, and you will give to your people not only a great book, but an unforgettable message; a sermon which has human beings walking up and down the pulpit platform; a sermon which has in it dialogue and conversation that lives and moves and has its being in reality. There is no more pragmatic preaching vehicle than the Dramatic Book Sermon.

Dr. Ozora S. Davis, President of Chicago University Divinity School, in a recent book published by the Chicago University Press, a book entitled "Religious Thought in the Last Quarter Century," says of this new method of preaching:

> Still more characteristic of this period of development is the appearance and popularity of the sermon on a book or a piece of literature. This has resulted not only in the definition of a particular sermon type, but has also called into being a large amount of literature on the religious values and use of the "book sermon" and "the literature of power." The

preacher best known for his use of the "book sermon" is Rev. William L. Stidger. The best example of his method may be seen in "There Are Sermons in Books" and "Finding God in Books." He names these discourses "Dramatic Book Sermons."

Since the limitations of this chapter are set, may I be bold enough to add to the two books which Dr. Davis mentions "Personal Power," which is a book of Dramatic Book Sermons devoted exclusively to books on psychology? I have no less of an authority than Dr. Francis L. Strickland, Professor of the History and Psychology of Religion in Boston University School of Theology, to testify that this use of books of psychology as the background of sermons is legitimate and helpful both to psychology and religion. Personally I have found a wonderful response from congregations in three great American cities to this type of a Dramatic Book Sermon.

As an illustration of its possibilities we find a sermon on "Sin and Its Consequences" in Dostoevesky's "Crime and Punishment," a sermon on "Sin and Conscience" in Hawthorne's "Scarlet Letter," a sermon on "Sin and Retribution" in Eliot's "Romola," a sermon on "Conversion" in Tolstoy's "The Resurrection." This may be illustrated indefinitely. The preacher who does not use this vehicle of preaching is passing up at least one effective method of adding variety to his ministry.

IV. Preaching Through Poetry

In this suggestion I have in mind a type of Dramatic Book Sermon in which the background of the sermon is a book of narrative poetry such as John Masefield's "The Everlasting Mercy," or "The Hell Hounds," Francis Thompson's "The Hound of Heaven," Alfred Noyes's "Watchers of the Sky" and "The Book of Earth," Edwin Markham's "The Shoes of Happiness," "How the Great Guest Came," "The Juggler of Touraine," "How Oswald Dined with God."

These narrative poems tell a regnant spiritual story. They may be used as the background of single great spiritual addresses which will stir audiences to a white heat of religious feeling, impulses, and resolves.

A second type of Dramatic Book Sermon through poetry which adds variety to one's approach to preaching is the use of single poems as the start and the heart of a sermon. I illustrate what I mean with one of Edwin Markham's short poems. It may be used as the basis of a sermon on "Hate" amplified into a sermon on "Peace" and "War," with the Prince of Peace in the background. It tells its own story and gives a convenient nucleus of a sermon which an audience will be able to grasp quickly. I do not mean to use this poem as a simple illustration; but somewhat as one might use a great picture as the background of a sermon, so may we use such a poem as

THE HIDDEN GLACIER

There is no time for hate, O wasteful friend:
Put hate away until the ages end.
Have you an ancient wound? Forget the wrong
Out in my West a forest loud with song
Towers high and green over a field of snow.
Over a glacier buried far below.

In his book "The Shoes of Happiness" Edwin Markham has a section called "Scrip for the Journey." It has a dozen such short poems, in every one of which is the seed of a sermon. I trust that I may be permitted once again to refer, for the sake of brevity, so that I may not need further to amplify this chapter, to my two books, "Giant Hours with Poet Preachers" and "Flames of Faith," for further illustrations of the possibilities of these nugget suggestions in poetry.

V. The Short Story Sermon

Here is a medium of approach to preaching often overlooked, and one which gives variety and human appeal to sermonizing.

Take a book like Ian Maclaren's "Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush." It is a book of short stories, every one of which is adaptable as the background of a sermon. "His Mother's Sermon," "A Scholar's Funeral," "His Bitter Shame," "Like as a Father," "As a Little Child," "A General Practitioner," and "The Doctor's Last Journey" are all rich in homiletic values. They have everything that a sermon ought to have. They are sermons in themselves. In

the hands of even the ordinary preacher, used as backgrounds for sermons, they melt the hearts of humanity.

It is a day of short stories. Kipling is full of stories which may be used in this way, and so is O. Henry. Also such short stories as "Passing the Torch," by Mary Raymond Shipman Andrews, "The Lost Speech," by Honoré Willsie Morrow, "God in the Darkness," by the same author, "The Perfect Tribute," by Mary Raymond Shipman Andrews, "The Toy Shop," by Margarita Gerry, "The Truce of God," by Mary Roberts Rinehart, "The Unknown Soldier," by Coningsby Dawson. This list might be multiplied a hundredfold. The use of the short story as a sermon vehicle has no less an authority than Jesus, who used his parables, like that of "The Prodigal Son," to fascinate his day and all days. We are merely extending that Christ-method. The story of Joseph's cloak of many colors is an Old Testament illustration of the same principle.

The fairy stories are full of such backgrounds. The preacher who uses "Alice in Wonderland," "Winnie the Pooh," "Gulliver's Travels," and Olive Schreiner's parables as backgrounds of sermons in this short-story sense has added to his repertoire of approach to preaching another variety and spice of life.

The story of Ruth and Hosea and Moses is an

illustration of what I mean by the Short Story Sermon.

VI. The Dramatic Art Sermon

"A room hung with pictures is a room hung with thoughts," says Sir Joshua Reynolds.

A church hung with the pictures which a preacher has brought to his congregations in his sermons is a cathedral hung with thoughts.

The method of preaching which I call Dramatic Art Sermons is a good one to give variety to sermonic approach.

I mean by the Dramatic Art Sermon to take such a painting as Watts's "Hope": the angel on the top of the world, playing a harp of only one string, with a single star shining in the sky, blind and broken and yet still with "Hope" in her heart. Let that picture be the legend of the sermon; the introduction, the constant theme from beginning to end of the sermon. Let it be the golden thread of the discourse, the heart of it. That is what I call a Dramatic Art Sermon. In Watts's paintings we find such subjects and themes as "Progress," "Industry and Greed," "Mammon," "The Spirit of Christianity," "The Dweller in the Innermost," "The All-Pervading," "Life's Illusions," "Love and Life," "Love and Death," "Love Triumphant," "The Shuddering Angel." "The Court of Death," "Time, Death, and Judgment," "Faith," "The Good Samaritan," "For He Had Great Possessions." These may be

obtained in a small book from the Tate Gallery in London at a nominal price. Also Millais's "The Boyhood of Raleigh" and "The Northwest Passage," Corot's Nature Paintings, Millet's "The Angelus," "The Gleaners," and others. Such a painting as "Behold I Stand at the Door and Knock," by Holman Hunt, is a perfect illustration of what I mean by using a painting as the background of a Dramatic Art Sermon. To tell the story of this painting, and to apply it to life and living, linking it up with the text which is its theme—and one has a tremendous preachment. The Dramatic Art Sermon is a powerful vehicle of preaching, and it also adds its touch of variety. Dr. Charles Nelson Pace, of Duluth, has written a little book called "Pictures That Preach" which I like to use as a source book for suggestions for the Dramatic Art Sermon. I commend it to those who wish to use this method of homiletics.

The field of sculpture may also be drawn upon for the Dramatic Art Sermon.

Take such a group as "The Fountain of Time," "The Spirit of the Great Lakes," or "Solitude," by Lorado Taft, and use each group as the background of a sermon. Take Dallin's "The Appeal to the Great Spirit," "The Signal of Peace," or "The Scout" and you have a great vehicle through which to preach. Take St. Gaudens's "Phillips Brooks" group, "The Shaw Memorial," or "Grief." Take Michaelangelo's "Moses" or "David."

VII. Negro Spirituals

There has in recent years been developing a new interest in Negro Psychology. We have Countee Cullen with his poetry, Roland Hayes with his singing; negro novels, dramas, short stories; several books on Negro Spirituals. In a very real sense there is a new and vital interest in the contributions that this race has made to the white race.

The Negro Spirituals are our only real Folk Songs. They grew up out of an emotional race and out of a spiritual need. Every one of the spirituals expresses some spiritual emotion. They have stood the test of the years, and they still survive, because they express universal emotions. They produce a spiritual effect on an audience, and it is an unforgettable thing to hear Roland Hayes sing them.

Just as it is true that singing these spirituals produces a spiritual effect, so will a sermon with a spiritual as a background do the same thing.

To have such a spiritual as "Gimme Dat Ole-Time Religion" sung in a church service and then to preach on that theme is a dramatic thing and an effective way of imparting the great truth of "The Old-Time Religion." For the sake of variety I think it is wise to use the spiritual as a medium.

Such a spiritual as "Nobody Knows de Trouble I'se Seen" gives a chance to preach a sermon on the thought that "Jesus understands." "I Can't Hear Nobody Pray" is a good vehicle for an indictment of the thought that we no longer have family prayer,

that we no longer have prayer in public school, that we no longer open legislative sessions with prayer, that we no longer hear the voice of prayer in public places as we did in another day.

"Singing All Over God's Heaben" is a vehicle for preaching the joyousness of religion. "My Lord, What a Mornin' It Will Be" gives a chance to preach on the general idea of "Judgment Days."

In a striking editorial that Dr. Halford Luccock wrote for an Easter thought he calls attention to a spiritual which has a refrain, "Who will be a livin' when I am dead?" The preliminary refrain goes, "What will be a wavin' when I am dead?" Answer, "Trees will be a wavin' when I am dead." Question, "What will be a runnin' when I am dead?" Answer, "Streams will be a runnin' when I am dead." Question, "What will be a singin' when I am dead?" Answer, "Birds will be a singin' when I am dead." Then comes the climax in a great chorus, "Who will be a livin' when I am dead?" And the thundering, melodious answer comes back in this old spiritual: "*I* will be a livin' when I am dead. I will be a livin' when I am dead!"

I have given a series of Negro Spiritual Sermons in Detroit, Kansas City, and Boston. They have been received with great appreciation. Preceding each sermon I have had negroes sing the spiritual on which I was to preach. It is a startlingly new vehicle, a dignified one, and a deeply emotional one. It grips the hearts of the people. The minister who

dares to do it will win the gratitude of his congregation. After all, why should we not dare venture into some new and even startling highways of sermon presentation? God knows, and children know, and youth knows that the appeal has been dull enough in the past; so much so that a common figure of speech has grown up, "As dry as a sermon." There have been several books on the Negro Spirituals published, containing the history of the greatest spirituals, the music to go with them, and the words. Nearly every one of them is capable of being used as a vehicle for carrying sermonic thought to people; and doing it effectively.

VIII. Hymn Sermons

For the sake of variety it is a good thing to give a series of what I call Hymn Sermons each year. This is not particularly new, but it *is* effective.

Take the great hymns of the Church—such as, "Rock of Ages," "Jesus, Saviour, Pilot Me," "Sweet Hour of Prayer," "Silent Night"—and tell the story of their composition. Second, tell the stories of religious experience that have clustered around such hymns. Scores of such stories exist. There are several books devoted to these hymns—human interest stories which are gripping and spiritually helpful. Most of these hymns have a rather simple outline, so that any ingenious preacher may trace it and develop it in a sermon. People know the great hymns and love them and will appre-

ciate any minister's humanizing his sermons now and then by preaching with these great hymns as backgrounds for his thought, or as vehicles to carry his truth to them.

Sometimes preachers have these hymns thrown on the screen immediately preceding such a sermon and use beautiful scenes to illustrate them as the congregation sings verse by verse. From this he goes into his Hymn Sermon. I have known men to be imaginative enough to have lights turned off and a hidden violinist play "Rock of Ages" following such a sermon.

I have presented in this chapter eight different types of homiletic approach, eight different vehicles for carrying truth to a congregation. I present them for the sake of variety. The deadly monotony of the old-time firstly, secondly, thirdly, and indefinitely seems to be about the only type of vehicle that the average preacher knows. He does this morning and night. He varies his plan very little. Variety is not only the spice of life, but it is also the spice of sermonic presentation. Let us prove to the people that we preach out of the overflow even in our method of approach; that we are not beggarly and living on starvation rations even in the mechanical form in which we carry our messages to humanity.

CHAPTER IX

SIMPLICITY IN PREACHING

Dr. John Kelman in "Prophets of Yesterday" says, in speaking of "The Pilgrim's Progress," "There is a story of some one who was asked if he understood John Bunyan's 'Pilgrim's Progress,' and who said that he did, and was hopeful that one day he would be able to understand the notes."

Dr. Kelman also says of Browning, in speaking of his supposed unintelligibility, "On the whole, Browning is easier to understand than many of his interpreters."

So it is with Christ and Christianity.

About all that the theologians have done, according to Edwin Markham, has been to obscure the simple, direct, living, and loving Christ and to make him unintelligible. The same thing is true of those who attempt to interpret Christ from the pulpit.

A certain great American educator went to Korea and was invited to address a group of students in the Y. M. C. A. My Korean friend, Hugh Cynn, told me what happened that day. The great American educator started his address out in this academic manner: "Gentlemen of Korea, all knowledge is divided into two parts, the concrete and the abstract."

When the young, American-educated interpreter translated that phrase into Korean, he said: "The gentleman from America says that he is glad to see you all here."

The man who interprets Jesus and the Bible to humanity must strive for a certain beautiful and snow-white, star-lit, silhouette-like, gray cliff-clean simplicity of utterance.

He might learn something from the simplicity of Greek sculpture, from the simplicity of Greek architecture, from the simplicity of Lincoln's life and words and writings; a Biblical simplicity. He might learn something from the simplicity of great music.

The day of ornate utterances, and sustained figures of speech, and long-flowing periods in public address is past.

The radio has had much to do with this necessity of simplicity in public utterance. When millions of people are listening in, when every second of the radio service costs vast sums of money, even in political campaigns the old-fashioned haranguing and bombast does not "get over." The most striking contrast possible of the old-time oratory versus the new type of simplicity in speech and fact-eloquence was in Governor Smith and Mr. Hoover. In the old days Mr. Smith's type of oratory would have swayed large public gatherings. But over the radio the clear, clean, brief, well-modulated, simple, business-like utterances of Mr. Hoover were convincing

enough to win the election for him. The radio has revolutionized public utterance, and it has created a new style of simplicity in public speech. It is here to stay. The man who has habitually addressed radio audiences knows that he must boil down what he has to say to its minutest form, and that he must simplify it to the essence of sunlight.

I. Some of the Dangers of Simplicity

By simplicity we do not mean what the French term "*noble candeur*" means, a term they applied to Woodrow Wilson, meaning "stupid simplicity." Simplicity does not mean that we must go into the pulpit and cut out paper dolls and hold them up to illustrate our sermons. That objective method may be all right for a kindergarten Sunday school class, or for other younger groups, but when a preacher tries it in a pulpit it lays his simplicity open to the charge of "stupid simplicity."

I have seen well-meaning preachers, who were striving for simplicity, take all sorts of objects into the pulpit, including bottles of water, paper dolls, cross-word puzzles, even books, and charts, and colored water in bottles. The demonstrative method, the objective method does not make for simplicity. It creates *reductio ad absurdum* more often than simplicity.

It is not wise to do anything that will make adults laugh, or even covertly smile, at your simplicity, and it is not wise to underestimate the intelligence

of an audience. There is much foolish talk about the average American audience being about fifteen years of age, which I doubt. It is well to be simple, but not to go to the extreme of paper-doll simplicity.

Elbert Hubbard used to tell of the first time he ever addressed an insane asylum. He went to the superintendent and asked him how he should talk to crazy people, stating that that was the first time he ever addressed an audience of the insane. The superintendent said, "You just go ahead and speak to them as if they had good sense"—adding, "which isn't a bad assumption for a public spaker to go on before any audience."

I know two American preachers who have a hobby of "words." They like to play with words in public utterance. They even lecture on "The Romance of Words" and talk as if there is some achievement in playing with words, words, words on a public platform. They forget that the entire testimony of Shakespeare, Anglo-Saxon literature, the Biblical simplicities, and the Lincoln-like literature is all against them.

II. The Simplicity of Great Thoughts

One needs but, to buttress this thesis, to remember the extreme simplicity of Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," of "Robinson Crusoe," of "Alice in Wonderland."

One needs but to remember the classics in all literature, those which have survived the mutations

of the centuries. They have had a certain rugged, rock-like simplicity.

One needs but to read a Magna Charta, a Declaration of Independence, an Emancipation Proclamation, or a "Man with the Hoe" to know that the utterances which not only "get over" to this day and generation, but which survive through all generations, are the great simplicities of literature.

If one wants a final argument for this plea for simplicity, all he needs to do is to go carefully and reverently into the Bible from Genesis to Revelation; to study the dawn-like simplicity of the Old Testament stories, the sun-clear simplicity of the Psalms, the simple beauty of the Songs of Solomon, the impact of simplicity which comes in the Proverbs, the child-like clarity of the parables, the understandable simplicity of every utterance of Jesus, of every gesture, of every conversation—The Woman at the Well, The Rich Young Ruler, The Adulteress, The Thief on the Cross; The Words in Gethsemane, and Calvary; a great, beautiful, sunlit simplicity.

How any minister can be oratorical and ornate who lives within the sacred library of the Bible and its simplicity is beyond this poor heart to understand. It is almost direct evidence that a man does not know his Bible, and is not steeped in its literature and in its atmosphere, if he is ornate or oratorical in speech· for the Bible is the essence of simplicity.

III. The Simplicity of Great Souls Is Proverbial

"There is no greatness in me save it be some touch of far-off greatness makes me know full well I am not great" is a line of poetry from Tennyson that I want to put into prose.

This is a characteristic of true greatness.

If you will take all the great men of whom you have read, and reduce their characteristics to a common denominator, you will find that that common denominator is simplicity, just as it is the common denominator of great living literature.

I happened to know Luther Burbank, the great plant wizard. Incidentally there was nothing that made him so angry as to be called a "wizard." He was furious at that appellation. The American newspaper fixed it on him, much to his disgust.

But those who knew him and who lived with him testify to his childlike simplicity. So it is with Edwin Markham, the great poet; so is it with Mr. Ford, who is thought to be extremely shrewd, but who is, on the contrary, extremely simple. So is it with Mr. Thomas A. Edison; so is it with men and women like Fred Stone, Fielding H. Yost, Ethel Barrymore, Herbert Hoover, Abraham Lincoln, General Lee, Grant, Gladstone.

Just as it is true in Greek art and architecture, so is it true in the lives of great men, that simplicity is the first characteristic. So does it mark greatness of public speech.

If one doubts that, he needs but to study the unforgettable, the everlasting utterances of Abraham Lincoln in his public addresses. The Gettysburg Address is the classic, an address which in bronze adorns the walls of one of Oxford's colleges, as the finest example of simplicity in public utterance that this great university can set before its literature-loving peoples and students.

IV. How to Gain Simplicity of Utterance

First by a study of the great classics of public utterance, beginning with the Greek orations, coming down to the Roman addresses, and centering particularly on the public addresses of the Bible.

Study the Mars' Hill oration of Paul, the speech before King Agrippa, the public addresses of Jesus, the parables, and we have models of simplicity, what I might call illustrations of pragmatism in oratory which are unassailable to this day. No better models of public oratory can be found anywhere. Study the Sermon on the Mount, which in reality was not a sermon, but a conversation, and you have the immortal classic of simplicity in public address.

Learn to be a "Sentimental Tommy" and search until doomsday for the exact word, the exact phrase, the exact text, and the exact sentence that will convey the thought you wish to carry as straight as an arrowhead.

Choose the simple Anglo-Saxon word rather than the complicated, many-syllabled word. Choose the

shortest word. Compactness and brevity make for simplicity. Avoid unnecessary amplification and circumlocution. Repetition often makes for simplicity, but not amplification and circumlocution.

Clearness is a part of the technique of simplicity. Test what you have to say by whether a child can understand it. One preacher I know comes home after the sermon is over and asks his youngest child what daddy said that morning. If that child has caught the heart of the thing, it has been well said.

Directness is a part of the technique of simplicity. To have an objective and then go to it like the path of a bullet in its directness makes for simplicity.

Honesty is a part of the technique of simplicity in public speech, for verily does the old copy-book adage hold good in public speech as well as in private morals:

> "O what a tangled web we weave
> When first we practice to deceive."

More tangled webs of oratory have been woven to confuse an audience than in any other way, because the preacher was not sincere, not direct and square and honest; because the note of sincerity was lacking from his sermon; because he did not believe and consequently could not feel deeply what his lips poured forth. The only real and final simplicity must spring from a great, genuine sincerity.

I wish that we who make public speech might study the carefully written advertising of automo-

bile firms these days. As I write this chapter I remember a phrase that flashed into my mind as I drove to my office this morning. It was printed on a large billboard on a white background in simple, understandable blue letters; nothing ornate, nothing flamboyant, nothing of over-promise, no circusing, no flare; just these simple, impelling, assuring, confidence-creating words:

"NEW PERFORMANCE—NEW STYLE—OLD DEPENDABILITY"

You can guess what car that simple phrase advertised. That particular firm has always used that simple, unornate approach to the public, and the public has come to expect "A Real Good Car" from that firm. The preacher might well study the radio utterances of this day, the automobile advertising of such cars as the Ford, the Packard, the Lincoln, the Dodge Brothers for simplicity of public approach.

I want to use a modern illustration of simplicity. I suppose that there is no more interesting column in America, nor one more widely read, than the column of Arthur Brisbane. What is the secret of its wide popularity? It is its extreme simplicity. Any child can understand its straightforward story and its application. What does Mr. Brisbane do in each paragraph? He preaches a little sermon. He may not take the stand that you do, but he preaches.

Therefore it is interesting to find in the reminis-

cence of Bob Davis this paragraph about the very earliest days of the writing career of Arthur Brisbane:

"Brisbane taught the doctrine of accuracy and terseness and simplicity. What is more to the point, he was the best living exponent of this style that has since given his writings distinction. Lucidity dominated the Brisbane school of reporting. He sought for and found men who could strip all verbiage from a plain fact and keep it plain to the last paragraph. Any cub who gave evidence of possessing that divine gift found Arthur Brisbane's unrestrained approval."

This means that the preacher who is truly striving to reach the public of to-day must not only study the simplicity of the Greeks, the Biblical orators, the Pauls, Christ, Lincolns, Shakespeares, but he must study the ad writers of to-day and the radio speakers. For these have learned a pragmatic type of utterance which "gets over" into the hearts of the people who live to–day. And the three graces of public utterance to-day are: Lucidity, Directness, and Simplicity, and the greatest of these is Simplicity.

CHAPTER X

PRIMING THE PUMP

INSPIRATION is a strangely elusive word.

Sometimes we feel like writing, and sometimes we do not feel like it.

Some days we go into our studies with a sermon idea throbbing in our hearts, and we can hardly wait until we can get at our pens or our pencils or our typewriters or our stenographers to pour forth that idea into burning words and flaming pictures.

Then on other days we sit down, bite the ends of our pencils, stare out of the windows at the great skies and the gray snow-covered streets and leafless trees, and our minds are as bare as those trees, and our souls as gray as the landscape, and our hearts as empty as last year's birds' nests. The sap streams refuse to flow. They are frozen up. The water will not come. The pump down into our subconscious minds will not bring up anything, either ideas or inspirations.

It looks very much as if the sheep will come to the church next Sunday morning and will not be fed. It looks as if the children will come to Old Mother Hubbard's cupboard and find it bare next Sunday. At best there will be a meager offering on that table of inspiration, and those who come will

likely go away hungry. So we think as we sit, unmoved and listless.

But modern psychology has taught us different things from that. Modern psychology has taught us that there are stored-up gold mines of subconscious riches down there waiting to be drawn up. Modern psychology has taught us that, if we have been reading, traveling, experiencing, loving, and living life to its fullest, if we have suffered and battled, and worried, and climbed, we have stored away great bank reserves and accumulations of the riches of experience which we can draw on at any time if we know how—if we are aware that such deposits are there and know how to get at them and bring them up.

Modern psychology has taught us that we have deep, flowing springs down in our subconscious selves which have never been tapped, but which are waiting to be opened up.

I heard President Faunce tell a beautiful story a few days ago at a Brown University banquet which was honoring his thirty years of service to that great educational institution.

He told of a certain old empty house halfway down the hill from Brown University in Providence. That house is built over the spring from which Roger Williams drank when he landed in Providence from a long ocean voyage. A Jew owned this house for years, but recently gave it to the city of Providence. There is a bronze plaque on the house which

reads something like this: "Beneath this house is the spring from which Roger Williams first drank. It is still flowing."

So might it be said that deep down within the subconscious self of every trained, consecrated minister there is a spring which will flow at any time if we know how to tap its sources.

When I visited the Lincoln birthplace I found a beautiful spring of clear white water flowing from a cave. Lincoln used to drink from this spring. It was a favorite play-place for this boy. It still flows.

Psychologists are now telling us that the subconscious self, or the storehouse of all of the experience of the race, of childhood, and of life, is seven-eighths beneath the surface and that our conscious selves, or what we actually use, is only one-eighth, like an iceberg. It is mostly under the conscious surface.

All creative work comes from the subconscious self, that part of us which is buried like a diamond deposit beneath the surface. I shall never forget the feeling I had when a prominent archæologist told me that some of the most sacred treasures of Egypt had lain buried only a cane's depth down near the pyramids, under sand over which tourists had been tramping for ages. So is it with the subconscious powers of creation.

Every poet, every creative genius will tell you that what he writes flows through him, that it does not seem to belong to him; that it comes up from

some hidden source, and pours out of him. Edwin Markham's great poem, "The Man with the Hoe," came in this way—every stanza but the first one pouring up from the subconscious self in the early waking hours of day. He had seen Millet's great painting, "The Man with the Hoe." He had brooded over it. He wrote the first stanza. Then he brooded all day. He went to sleep. In the early morning hours the second stanza came. He leaped out of bed and wrote it down. Every succeeding stanza came in exactly that fashion.

If there were no other proof of the hidden resources of the subconscious mind, the fact that all great creative work comes in that way would be convincing.

So there is no reason to be baffled when one seems listless and indifferent on some sermonizing days. There is no reason to feel that the end has come when ideas seem dead and will not flow through typewriter keys or through the fingers with pen and pencil in hand. The psychologists have taught us that it is all down there in the subconscious self waiting just to be tapped, waiting to be summoned to the surface, waiting to be called into action.

Therefore the problem is to learn how to tap these hidden, these deeply hidden springs of the mind and make them flow.

If one knows how, one can summon all the past experience of life at any hour, at any need. But he must learn how.

I have a formula that will help, I am sure. I have learned it by experience, and it has sound psychological basis.

We all remember the old pumps of boyhood. They were often in the house, but sometimes they were in the back yard. They would not flow until they had been primed. One had to take a little pan of water and pour that into the mouth of the pump and then pump furiously until the resources of that particular well were tapped and a stream started to flow.

Two or three things will have to be noted in this analogy: First, that the water supply of that old well was not at fault. There was plenty of water there—deep, hidden springs of water, enough to supply a town; but it just wouldn't flow. It was the fault of the pump. The water was there all the time waiting to be brought to the surface, like hidden treasures, like the fire and hidden power in the earth.

So is it with the powers and the streams of the subconscious mind. The fact that we are not inspired, that the streams of thought do not flow easily, does not mean that they are not there. It simply means that we have not started them to flowing.

Second, we must remember that one did not have to have even clean water to start the old pump to flowing. One could prime that pump with muddy water dipped up from the gutter, or with rain water

from a barrel near the corner of the house. That did not matter, for when the clear stream from the deeper sources got to flowing this very soon clarified the water, and the flow was clear and pure.

This leads me to my practical suggestion for the minister who goes into his study to write a sermon and finds that the creative stream will not flow.

That suggestion is to prime the pump.

Start to read a poem, and brood on that poem. If that does not prime the pump, read another type. Read a Tennyson, and if that does not work, read a Browning or a Lanier or a Markham. Pretty soon you will find that the streams from the subconscious mind, the creative streams are flowing. They have been quickened and awakened by that priming process.

A few moments of prayer and meditation will often be the means of priming the pump of the subconscious. If the Morning Watch brought about nothing more definite than this, it is worth installing in one's routine. A moment of quiet meditation and prayer in the morning opens the fountains and starts the streams to flowing freely.

Even such a mechanical thing as priming the pump by writing a letter to a friend—or just hammering away on the typewriter—will frequently start the streams to flowing. I have gone into my study many a time when the pressure of many demands was great. I have had that empty and that emptied feeling. But there was a sermon to write.

It would not come. I had tried everything. I have read poetry and prayed and had a few moments of quiet. I have read devotional chapters in some of my favorite books. I have read prayers from my favorite collections of prayers. But the streams would not flow as I wanted them to flow. Everything came mechanically and without fire or flame. It all had to be forced.

Then, in disgust, I have turned to my writing contracts on my desk and I have said to myself: "I will write an article for 'Forbes' on 'The Business Man and Religion.'" I have started that rather mundane process. I have gotten interested in even that earthly theme. Then I have felt myself quickened, almost as if an electrical something had happened to me, and, before I knew it, the streams had begun to flow.

Talking with a friend will do it. A conversation over the telephone will often start the streams to flowing. That's why I say that even muddy water from the gutter will start the clear, crystal, creative, streams of the inner self to flowing. They will soon clarify the waters and wash away the mundane, trivial thing that started it all.

In the General Electric laboratories they showed me the largest dynamo that had ever been built. It was so large that it looked like a house. It took them five years to build it and a solid year to test it and to get it into running order.

Then they showed me a little dynamo about the

size of an automobile battery which they called an "exciter." The big dynamo would not start until that little "exciter" had been running for a time. That little "exciter" started the streams from the field of electrical power to flowing into that big fellow, and the deed was done. But it took a primer or an "exciter" even to get the big fellow going.

Work of some kind is the best kind of inspiration.

We come from our studies and say: "I had no inspiration this morning. I could not write a sermon."

My writer friends tell me that they do a certain "stunt" each day whether they feel like it or not.

When they go into the workshops, if they do not feel like writing they write anyhow, and pretty soon the very process of writing, even if a lot of that morning's writing has to be thrown away, starts the streams to flowing, primes the pump of creative work, and the deed is done.

Great preachers to whom I have talked, great writers whom I have interviewed with the idea of learning how they work, and how they get so much creative work done, tell me that they set for themselves a certain "chore" and then do it every day. If they do not feel like writing, they write anyhow, and, before long, they do feel like it.

This is all good sound psychology. When we do not feel like writing sermons let us prime the pump as we did in the old days; prime it with any sort of writing that happens to be at hand: a letter to a

friend, a little copy for the Sunday bulletin, writing out some plans for the week; prime it with the reading of a great poem, or some devotional literature; prime it by hearing some good music, even if it means turning on the radio early in the morning; prime it with a few moments of prayer; prime it with a talk over the telephone; and tap the inner, the deeper springs that, like the Roger Williams spring, are still flowing underneath the house of our minds.

This is the secret of turning a "Blue Monday," or a despondent day, or a fallow field into a desert blowing with the roses, the perfume and beauty of creative work.

CHAPTER XI

CREATING THE ATMOSPHERE

I TALKED one day with the architect of the Fine Arts Palace of the Exposition at San Francisco and asked him why he had built that semicircular entrance to the Fine Arts Palace.

He had built a semicircular colonnade of beautiful Grecian columns, each column twined with vines and flowers, and a beautiful lagoon surrounding this colonnade. Every person who entered the Fine Arts Palace had to pass these columns, reminiscent of Greece and Athens.

It was such a long way around to get into the Fine Arts Palace. It seemed foolish to me. Therefore I asked him a foolish question.

He said, with what I now consider infinite patience: "I made it necessary for the visitors, in order to reach the beautiful art work of the Arts Palace, to pass through those beautiful columns so that they would be in the mood to see the pictures before they entered those doors in the center. Most of the Exposition visitors who enter the Art Palace will have just emerged from the Zone of Pleasure, the Machinery Halls, the Horticulture Palace; from the glare and blare of airships, wheels, pop-corn venders, and ice-cream hawkers. They would be in no mood

to understand or to appreciate the fine art which we have assembled from all over the earth. However, if they pass through that colonnade, their hearts will be subdued to the proper mood to appreciate art. Therefore I make it necessary for them to pass through the beautiful colonnades before they enter."

It is hot, arid, acrid, baked, sapped, sated, blistered —cruelly burned out in the Arizona desert—and then suddenly one feels, as the train speeds westward, the tang of salt air in the night rushing through the car windows. Then a strange odor of orange blossoms, and ocean coolness, and mountain breezes, and one's lips leap to song—and there is a certain hilarity about getting into California because one has had a soul-preparation for this Promised Land, through contrast.

I remember once approaching the Sebastopol Proving Grounds of Luther Burbank in California. It was in the cool of the evening. There was the tang of water rushing through irrigation ditches, and the sweet smell of water on hot soil in the air. Then suddenly a rush of wind and the scent of lilies on the air—two miles from Sebastopol, where more than 200,000 lilies were in bloom at one time. It was a sort of an ordination to what was coming; a preparation, a setting of the atmosphere for what was to follow.

So the preacher must create an atmosphere in every service for the sermon that is to follow. Many a fine sermon has fallen as flat as a flounder dying on

the beach because there was no atmosphere, no getting of the souls of an audience ready for that sermon beforehand. Even the Spiritualist mediums—true or false, whatever you may believe about them—create an atmosphere for the revelations they make, for the summoning of those who have gone before. They will tell you that dark rooms and silence are necessary as an atmosphere for what is to be revealed.

The theater is adept at this business of creating an atmosphere, and they do it with the soft music of the orchestra, with subdued lights, and, just before the play begins, with total darkness. Then comes the use of scientifically focused stage lights and spot-lights, the colors blended to the emotions that are to be conveyed from actors to the audience. They do not leave the matter to chance. They have made a study of the psychology of colors, effects, and atmosphere.

I. Types of Atmospheres Usually Created in a Church Service

I went to a prayer hour with my high school daughter. A preacher spoke. What he said was good, but it didn't matter.

It didn't seem to matter to him, and it didn't matter to that high school girl, and it didn't matter to me.

He left the people just as he had found them—

only perhaps a little more depressed and weary and listless and bored.

It reminded me of the ancient classic of the preacher who announced at the close of the service that there would be a meeting of the "Board" at the front of the church. A total stranger walked up and, when he was asked who he was and why he was there, said, "The preacher announced a meeting of the bored, and there was nobody in the service that was more bored than I was; so I came up to the meeting."

I analyzed that meeting. I thought about it all the way home. My daughter and I tried to find out what was the matter with that event.

We decided that the preacher had not gotten his people ready for what he had to say. There had been no atmosphere created. The room was meager to begin with, the music was poor and indifferent. The room was even cold. All the more necessity for that preacher to create an atmosphere before he attempted to get a spiritual idea over to the people.

Some preachers create a "no atmosphere." They are indifferent themselves, and therefore they leave a "no atmosphere" about them. They are like some animals. They leave the kind of an atmosphere that they naturally exude. It can be no more beautiful than they are in themselves when they approach an audience. If they have a smoke-screen attitude, they will throw a smoke-screen atmosphere about themselves. If they have the nature of an ink-

fish, they will throw the atmosphere of darkness around them as if they would protect themselves or hold themselves aloof from an audience.

Some of us create a negative atmosphere. We do not exactly draw away from people or isolate them from us, or try to hide our real selves from them, but we actually throw out spiritual electrons which are negatives. We create a negative atmosphere which soon develops into an antagonistic atmosphere.

There is the "no atmosphere," the "negative atmosphere," and the "spiritual atmosphere."

The spiritual atmosphere subdues you, lifts you up into higher realms, and gets your own heart and the hearts of an audience ready for whatever utterance you may have to bring to an audience. But the spiritual atmosphere is absolutely essential to a successful service always.

I can best illustrate what I mean by using Maude Royden, the much-criticized and much-discussed preacher from England. I have heard her preach both in the United States and in England a dozen times. I have never heard her speak that she did not throw out a spiritual aroma, an atmosphere that took her audience out of time and made them feel eternal; that bound them to her and to her preachment with hoops of steel; something that exuded from her like the perfume of flowers from a garden on a summer day; something that swept over one as the perfume-laden winds of California sweep out over the desert. You cannot define it,

you cannot diagram it, you cannot blue-print it. It is something subtle, spiritual; but it *does* create an atmosphere for Miss Royden.

Roland Hayes is the same way. The minute he steps to a public platform, lifts his head toward the skies, pours forth his voice like a nightingale, you feel, and the entire audience feels, that he is pouring forth something in addition to his voice; that he is pouring forth his soul and the summed-up wistful loneliness of his entire race; that he is pouring forth love into his audiences as a rain-fed, snow-melting stream of the Swiss Alps pours forth to the plains below. It is what I call atmosphere for want of a better word.

All that I know, or all that any man knows, about atmosphere is that it comes from the soul of an actor, of a public speaker, a violinist, a singer; that it is an impassioned desire to take an audience into one's heart and to lift them up until they walk with God amid the stars. Therefore I come to the conclusion that the atmosphere of a service must primarily come forth from the speaker; that it must pour forth from his heart out to his audience; that he must carry it about with him, as the husband of Julia Ward Howe is said to have carried an atmosphere of freedom about with him. So must the preacher when he steps into a pulpit. However, it is also possible to create an atmosphere for a sermon and a service with externals to a certain degree.

II. How to Create an Atmosphere of Worship for a Service and a Sermon

Gothic architecture will do it, but most of the preachers of America do not have this handy help.

Beautiful windows will do it, but there is a woeful lack of good taste in church windows in the United States. We are content with anchors, hour glasses, swords, fat angels, and reproductions of Hoffman windows in cheap glass; so there is no help there.

Subdued lights will do it, but most of us have no equipment, as simple as that is to install, to help us produce an atmosphere of worship and reverence in our churches.

A great and beautiful organ will do it. More of us have organs than anything else. In lieu of an organ, violin music, the harp, or any other type of really beautiful music will put the people in the mood of worship.

It is especially needful that we get into the mood of worship when the early part of our popular type of an evening service is taken up with what is called "A Big Sing," with hilarity, happiness, and freedom from restraint. This modern type of a democratic service is a fine development in our church life, and I, for one, approve of it—on one condition. And that condition is that full and careful provision be made to carry that congregation through a transition from that mood of hilarity to true worship; and that is no small chore for the minister in charge. However, if it is to be a service of worship and any-

thing better than vaudeville or an entertainment, this transition has to be made; from the mood of laughter into the mood of love; from the mood of democracy into the mood of divinity; from the mood of fun into the mood of faith; from the mood of visiting into the mood of visioning the eternities.

The transition is up to the preacher. He must see to that. A prayer hymn with the lights off, singing the verses softly; a violin solo, or *vox humani* stops on the organ, the echo organ; a few moments of silence in the darkness, a word of deep, genuine, sincere prayer by the preacher—and the mood is on.

In the final analysis the preacher is responsible for the atmosphere of worship. He must produce it by his own reverence, his own love, his own kindly attitude toward his congregation, and his own approach to God. He must come to that mood-making, that atmosphere-creating business on sandaled feet.

The matter of creating an atmosphere is largely personal.

The Duke of Wellington was about to send one of his men on a perilous journey into the very camp of the enemy. The man got ready to go. He was asked if there was anything he wanted before he went. He went to the Duke and said, "Before I go first give me a grip of your conquering hand, sir!"

Somebody said that Emerson when he died would go to hell. "If he does, he will change the climate of hell," responded a friend.

General Lee is said to have carried about with him

an atmosphere of love and kindliness that everybody felt, even the slaves.

And, just as the hearts of the disciples were strangely warmed on the road to Emmaus, so will the hearts of a congregation be strangely warmed when the minister of the day has created the proper atmosphere for his service and his sermon.

Out of the splendid overflow of his love, an overflow which acts in exactly the same way that the overflow of the Nile does, there will come a fertility of feeling, a fruition of faith, a blossoming of beauty, a harvesting of high and holy hopes in the heart of humanity. Men will feel the invisible vibrations of God's presence. Men will know that we have been with God, and out of the overflow of that experience there will flow a stream of everlasting life.

CHAPTER XII

REACHING THE PEOPLE IN PREACHING

PEOPLE are interested in sports, business, politics, stock markets, farming, taxes, sickness and health, theaters, hospitals, schools, weather, neighborly gossip, scandal, sex, social life, and religion.

A while ago a Philadelphia newspaper brought out a book called "One Day." In that single book this paper published all of the material that had appeared in their newspaper in a single day.

Any study of such a book or of any newspaper will teach any preacher a lot about the things in which people are interested. Such a study will reveal the rather interesting fact that people are greatly interested in "Sports." Note the pages that are devoted to "Sports" in any newspaper—even such a conservative paper as the Boston *Transcript.* Even the poor are interested in what the rich are doing in "Society."

The preacher who studies the newspaper pages to learn the things in which people are interested is a wise preacher. The newspapers reach the people. If we note what emphasis is put in the news columns, we may know the things in which people are most interested.

I once talked with "Sid" of the *American Maga-*

zine about this matter. He was one of the surest judges of what interests people in America. He had boosted the circulation of that magazine to above the two-million mark on one theory, and that theory was that, first of all, people were interested in themselves. Second, they were interested in their neighbors, in other people. In a few words, the first interest of humanity is humanity, or what he called "Personality."

Peter Clarke MacFarlane once wrote a series of "Personality" articles and tried to sell them to Mr. Phillips, editor of the *American Magazine* preceding Mr. Siddal. Mr. Phillips said, "People are not interested in personality articles." Mr. MacFarlane insisted that they were, and he said further: "The next great American magazine will be based on personality articles. The hour has come for some far-seeing editor to understand this."

Mr. Phillips turned Peter Clarke MacFarlane's suggestion and his series of personality articles down. He was an old man and did not see the signs of the times.

A few years later Mr. Siddal, who was present at the conversation which I have just quoted (present as a young assistant to Mr. Phillips), was made editor of the *American Magazine.* The first thing he did was to send for Peter Clarke MacFarlane. He said to him: "I was in the office that day you announced your theory that the next greatly circulated magazine in America would be founded on

personality articles. Mr. Phillips turned your idea down. I believe that you are right. I want you to do a series of personality articles for me."

That started the present vogue of personality articles. Now we have four or five magazines, in addition to the *American Magazine*, which specialize in this field; we have one magazine called by the name *Personality*, and we are aware of the fact that few popular magazines are published which do not carry at least one or two personality articles. We have even seen the advertising experts using this psychology of humanity's interest in personality. A dozen products in America, from cigarettes to yeast, use personalities through which to reach people.

People are interested in themselves first of all, and, secondly, in other personalities. The vast circulation of the *American Magazine*, which is based on this theory, proves that it works.

Therefore, preachers ought to learn this lesson and preach through the things in which people are most interested.

I. People Are More Interested in Their Immediate Home Problems Than in Anything Else

Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick says in *Harper's Magazine:* "There is nothing that people are so interested in as themselves, their own problems, and the way to solve them. That fact is basic. No

preaching that neglects it can raise a ripple on a congregation."

It will be noted that Dr. Fosdick comes to the same conclusion that Mr. Siddal came to in his conduct of the editorial policy of the *American Magazine*, and both of these men, in their different fields, are successful to a remarkable degree in reaching and holding and helping people. Indeed, Dr. Fosdick speaks in words almost identical with Mr. Siddal's when he says, "There is nothing that people are so interested in as themselves."

He further says in this same article, "He who really helps folks to understand their own lives and see their way through their spiritual problems is performing one of the most important functions in the modern world."

Following this suggestion up, under this first division of this thought, let us ask ourselves just what the home problems of people are.

They are interested first of all in health, food, exercise, "vitalic breathing," "diet and health."

Books dealing with reducing weight, diet, health, food values, vitamines sell like novels—and better. Why? Because these books deal with a definitely personal matter; the state of health and happiness; with that thing called the body—which every man knows is the citadel of the soul.

People are not only interested in problems of health and diet, but in all domestic problems. Books dealing with marriage, the psychology of domestic

relationships, the difficulties relating to man and woman and sex—these are among the dominant interests of human beings, because they are questions that help them. They respond to discussions dealing with facts along the lines and in the areas of their problems. All books of psychology dealing with home, domestic relationships, marriage, sex, and allied human reactions sell readily. Then why should not the preacher see that there creeps into his preaching material from these books and from life's experiences, that will touch intelligently on these closely human and personal relationships and problems?

People are interested in adolescent psychology, in the pre-school psychology, in the problems of the development of childhood into puberty, and the psychology that helps in that perilous age of adolescence—high school and the mating period of both boy and girl. Preachers ought to be giving parents, and young men and women themselves, in every sermon a rich psychological background for their very real and pressing problems of adjustment and development.

The preacher who has a definite and scientific knowledge of the field of psychology can do this—and none other. This is his particular field. This is his sacred stamping ground for all time.

A better understanding of childhood, a closer knowledge of every definite period of the development of young men and women, will help parents in

difficult problems and will also help young people better to understand themselves in the most baffling experiences of their own development. There will be a rich response to the preacher who, out of the overflow of his own definite knowledge of these personal problems, preaches so that he helps each group, each week. They will rise up and call him blessed.

II. People Are Interested in Learning That All of Their Particular Individual Problems are Universal Problems

It is a comforting thing for a young couple, who have had their first quarrel, to learn that other young people quarrel also. They are often baffled by quarrels and feel that they are different from other people; that their romantic love was a flimsy thing at best; that they are near the rocks and rapids in their home.

I have had innumerable experiences of being able to comfort people in my personal relationships with them and in my preaching by letting them know, with a smile of comradeship, that their problems are universal; that I have had them and that all men and women have them. It is comforting to a young husband to learn from his preacher that all women are a bit childish at times, that they are apt to be jealous over trifles, that they have child-minds about many things.

I have two men in mind. One was a great manu-

facturer: I will call him C. Another was a real estate man: I will call him P.

At different periods they came to me, baffled beyond hope with their problems. What they told me seemed trivial to me—not major, or insurmountable, difficulties. Why? Because I had had the same difficulties to deal with and had surmounted them. Like Job's problems, they had disappeared. They ceased to baffle me when I found out that other young couples were having the same quarrels, misunderstandings, and difficulties that I had been having.

When C. came to me he was sure that he would have to get a divorce from his wife: "She acted just like an unreasonable baby."

I was able to make him see that that was a universal experience of a young husband; to come to the place where, from his viewpoint, his wife acted "like a baby." "The most unreasonable demands—no ten-year-old child would ever think of making such demands." So it went.

He went away with a smile when I told him that a wise old man once said to me, "Treat them as if they were all about ten years old, and you can get along with them."

Man has a desire to have the easiest chair in the house, the best light to read by, the first chance at the morning paper, the best bed and the best room in the house. Man expects adoration, adulation, and preferment. He gets it. Wives offer it to him.

His mother before his wife gave it to him. His daughters do the same thing. This is hard on the young wife, but it is not so hard when she learns that all men are alike in that respect.

The problems with growing children are more or less universal.

Debt, the installment plan and resultant worries, rents, upkeep of houses, clothes—all of these problems are universal, and it is mighty comforting for a preacher, out of the overflow of his own experience and observation, to let people know of the universality of most problems.

Disillusionment and failure in life are universal. Lincoln failed in business, he failed in love, he failed in politics, he failed in every election except two. His life was a failure from beginning to end, save in his great mission of freeing the slaves. It is comforting to other people to know that disillusionment and failure are well-nigh universal. A study of the life of Lincoln from this viewpoint is helpful to people. That is perhaps the reason Dr. Parker said at the close of his ministry, "If I had my ministry to live over again, I would preach more to broken hearts." Why? Because he knew that most people fail, that disillusionment is the universal experience, that dreams do not come true, that visions do not materialize. It is most comforting to other people to know that troubles, and disillusionment, and failure are the universal experience; that we only approximate our dreams and ideals and visions.

III. After Themselves, People Are Interested in Other Human Beings

From the days of the cave man gossiping around an open fireplace down to the modern Noonday Lunch Club, from the days when women met in the cave to talk about the other cave women down to Ladies' Aid Societies and Women's Clubs, human beings have been interested—first in themselves and next in other human beings.

The gregarious instinct is one of the deepest-seated instincts of the race. The cave man around the open fire, Lincoln whittling a stick in a grocery store talking politics, to the modern Rotary Club is an evolution of the male gregarious instinct, the interest that human beings have in each other.

The wise preacher will never forget this basic fact in his dealings with people and in his preaching. Out of the overflow of his own social instincts, out of the overflow of his love for humanity, his love for children, for youth, for homes, for old age, he will preach, and people will be fascinated.

When I was a college student, a young preacher came to Meadville, Pa., and immediately won the hearts of the students because he knew how to interpret religion through human romance and love, because he preached about "home."

IV. People are Interested in Reflections of Themselves Which They See in the Mirror of Biography

In Bishop Francis J. McConnell's new book, "Borden Parker Bowne," the Bishop tells us that Dr. Bowne was greatly interested in the Department of Homiletics in the Theological School. He says that Dr. Bowne once wrote him a letter about preaching in which he said: "It appears to me that there should be a way of studying sermonic literature and the sources of sermon material which should be fruitful beyond anything yet attempted. Comparative studies of preachers, studies of biography, studies of literature with reference to its homiletic value—all these might be used so as to make the dry bones of homiletics live and move and have their effective being."

Thus we see that no less an authority than Borden Parker Bowne understood that the field of biography would make homiletics live and the desert of preaching to blossom as the rose.

People like personality stories, they like biography and autobiography because they see themselves, their mistakes, what they might still be, in stories of other human beings. Ludwig's "Napoleon," "Hozenzollern," "Frederick," and "Goethe" are great books to preach through.

Biography sells like fiction to-day because human beings are more interested in other human beings than anything else save their interest in themselves.

The wise preacher will read much in the field of biography and preach through it, sure of a universal interest on the part of his audience of all ages.

We have never had such floods and streams and Niagaras of biographical literature flowing from the presses as now.

The *Atlantic Monthly* recently offered a generous prize for what they designated as "any kind of biography."

Magazine editors have a saying that "every human being has at least one great story."

Preachers are wise who will read so widely in the field of biography that their sermons drip with human experiences, that human beings walk up and down their pulpits. Preachers are wise who learn that these two interests are the dominant interests of humanity. Preachers ought at least to learn as fast as magazine editors and book editors what the people want and will listen to, and will buy, and will come to hear talked about.

V. The Process of Leading People Up From This Interest in Themselves to an Interest in Others Is the Great Task of the Preacher

We start with the knowledge that people are first of all more interested in themselves than in anything else or anybody else on the earth.

We go from that step to the knowledge that peo-

ple are secondly interested in other human beings, in other personalities.

We go from that interest in our preaching to interest people in social groups, in industrial problems, in other races, in an international outlook, into international thinking and serving. From this interest in themselves grows all of the spirit of service and philanthrophy in the world. From this interest in themselves, properly used by the preacher, there develops an interest in all works of charity and missions.

This was the Jesus method of interesting people.

The Bible is full of persons. Personality magazines and biography and autobiography have nothing on the Bible for human interest material. The Bible personalities fascinate people because their experiences were universal. Figures of speech from the Bible live in the hearts of humanity forever. That is proof of its appeal, of its universal answer to life's problems of personality.

The personalities of the Bible from Moses to Jesus stand out as if they were mountain peaks silhouetted against a crimson sunset. Jesus is the Mount Everest of them all.

CHAPTER XIII

"THE INNER EARNESTNESS" OF PREACHING

GOETHE is said to have had an "Inner Earnestness."

One day Fred Stone told me about the first public appearance he and Dave Montgomery ever made on what is called "Big Time" in vaudeville. It was in Keith's Theater in Boston. That theater ran a program that started in the morning at ten o'clock and closed at midnight. They were having their first performance on the "Big Time."

They looked through a hole in the curtain and saw the audience. It consisted of a few ushers. Montgomery said, "Let's save ourselves for tonight, Fred!"

Fred Stone replied: "We'll give 'em the best we have, Dave! We'll do that all the time and every time. There may be an usher audience, but there may also be a manager out there behind a post to see what we have. You never can tell!"

Then Fred added: "I always give 'em the best I have, whether it's a small crowd or a large crowd; whether it's a small town or a city; whether I feel well or not. Give 'em the best you have!"

I had about the same expression from Miss Ethel

Barrymore, another genius of the stage, who deals with human beings gathered in audiences, and who has recently had a theater named for her in New York City. There are few greater artists in America. Her attitude toward an audience ought to be helpful to the man who preaches. I once heard her state the principles on which she lives and moves and has her professional being.

We were having a luncheon as the guests of Sinclair Lewis, who, while he didn't compliment the ministry very highly in "Elmer Gantry," is a great artist nevertheless, according to no less an authority than William Allen White.

We had this party after one of Miss Barrymore's performances. Lewis was feeling a bit exuberant that day and during the course of the conversation about the table said: "You didn't do your best today, Ethel. You held out on us!"

For a minute I thought there was going to be trouble.

It was plain to be seen that she was indignant at his facetious remark. But, as ever, contained and composed, the fires burning within, she said, with a good deal of scorn: "I want you to know, Mr. Lewis, that I always give an audience everything that I have, whether it is in New York or Kansas City; whether I am sick or well. That is a life-long rule of our family, a tradition that has been drilled into me from girlhood. Give an audience the best you have any time and every time!"

I had occasion, two years later, to know that Miss Barrymore actually carries this rule into effect. She was playing in Boston in "The Kingdom of God." She was scheduled to appear in the Copley Methodist Church Sunday morning service when I was to preach on her play. That week she developed influenza, which settled in an ear abscess. She struggled through her performance that week with a temperature of over a hundred. She came to church as per schedule. I thought that she looked unusually worn and pale. That night she went to the hospital for a week. I then discovered that the very night I had seen her show and had thought that she gave the finest performance I had ever seen her give she had had a temperature of 102. She had a temperature when she came to my church.

I said, "Why didn't you have a doctor?"

She responded, "I was afraid that he would make me quit the show!"

"But you didn't need to come to church when you were sick?" I said.

"I had promised you, and you had advertised that I would be there, and I didn't want to disappoint either you or the people. Besides I wanted to hear the sermon." She smiled.

But I knew why she had come. She had come because there is a beautiful "inner earnestness" about her life. She gives herself to her audiences. She never breaks an engagement. She takes her profession seriously.

I. An Inner Earnestness About Sermon Preparation

When we see the inner earnestness in Fred Stone, a man who has climbed to the top of his profession as a humorist through giving the best that he has to every audience at every performance, we get the feeling that some of the slovenly ways and the slovenly preparation, the indifference and the lassitude of our vocation is despicable, to say the least about it, and that the wise ones may learn from these two great characters who, too, like us, have to deal with humanity in public audiences, have to win their favor, and stir their souls, and lift them out of time into something else.

I have heard of preachers who write their sermons on Saturday night. I have heard of preachers who boasted of that fact, which seemed to me to be the limit of stupidity, carelessness, and dishonesty. It is bad enough to do that insincere thing; but it is worse to boast about it.

The preacher who accepts so many outside speaking engagements, and who makes so many lecture trips that he fails to give to his own church the best that he has, is guilty of a desecration of the inner earnestness of preaching which is nothing short of sacrilege. No man can give the best that he has with a lecture schedule which leaves him no time for study and careful sermon preparation and which leaves him physically fatigued at the end of a week. To get home Saturday night and still have the Sun-

day morning sermon to write is taking money under false pretenses; and that is a criminal offense in the eyes of the law.

I have a phrase, which I have borrowed from Ellis Parker Butler, which applies to preachers. He has a little book called "Gathering Goat Feathers," a perfect illustration of the man who does everything else but the thing that he is paid for doing, the thing that he is called to do, the thing that his professional success demands that he do. When he is frittering away his item on nonessentials, Butler says that he is "gathering goat feathers." Too many preachers gather goat feathers.

The minister who palms off perspiration for inspiration in a sermon is guilty of diluting the milk with water, of loading the sugar down with white sand, of holding his hands on the scales while he weighs the produce for the customer. That is too despicable a thing for a man of his holy calling to be about.

II. The Preacher Should be a "Sentimental Tommy" in His Preparation

We all remember "Sentimental Tommy," who searched for days for the exact word and would not be content with anything less than the exact word. We all ought to be Sentimental Tommies in our earnestness, in giving our best to an audience in our preparation.

We ought to be Sentimental Tommies in our

search for a word and a phrase and a text. We ought never to be satisfied with a text unless it expresses exactly what we want it to express. We ought not to be happy with just an approximate approach in that text to the idea we want to convey. We ought not to be satisfied just to know that we can "get by" with that text. Even if it means nights and days of search and investigation, of analysis and definition, we ought to search like a gold miner for a nugget, like a laboratory experimenter for his formulæ, like an Edison for a truth; search for the exact word and the exact phrase, the exact illustration and the exact text for a sermon.

This thought applies not only to words, and phrases, and illustrations, and texts, but it applies to ideas. We have a reason for preaching, on a certain day, to a certain group, on a certain theme. We ought not to be willing to take an old sermon or an old theme and stretch it to fit the occasion, if we have a hidden idea that there is something more apt for that occasion, if we were willing to take the time and trouble to search for it and prepare it.

I have heard Bishop Edwin Holt Hughes preach a hundred times, from coast to coast. I have heard him preach on all sorts of occasions. I have never yet heard him when what he had to say did not sound as if it had been prepared for the very occasion in which he was speaking. Bishop Hughes has the air of having given the best that he has to every event. He has the atmosphere of a man who has

made careful preparation for that event beforehand. He has an inner earnestness about his preaching which ought to be an inspiration to every young minister in America.

Horace Greeley used to say, "I would write shorter editorials, but I haven't time," which was this great Civil War editor's way of saying that it takes more care, preparation, consecration, and concentration to write a "few brief remarks" than it does to preach a long, tedious, tiring sermon. Perhaps this is the basic reason why most sermons "seem long."

III. The Sin of Saving One's Self for a Greater Day

I remember hearing a preacher say to an associate one rainy day, as they started into the pulpit: "That is a small crowd. I'll save this sermon for a larger crowd!"

One cannot help but feel that the small crowd which braved the winds and sleet and rain to get to church that day was the group which deserved the best sermon that that preacher had. I suppose that that preacher himself would have admitted the truth of this viewpoint if he had stopped to figure it out. He would not have penalized that loyal, faithful, eager, hungry group—a group of individuals which was either unusually faithful or unusually hungry for the preacher's best—if he had thought the thing through. He would have given them the best that

he had that morning instead of saving it for a larger crowd.

I know a minister once who did exactly the opposite of this.

He was just starting off a new ministry in a new city. A few months preceding this move he had had a sermon selected by Dr. J. Fort Newton in "The Best Sermons" of that year. When he got to the new church he discovered that they had never taken prayer meeting very seriously. In fact, a large crowd of ten or fifteen had made up the prayer meeting group for years. But this minister was used to having large prayer meetings because he took the prayer meeting seriously.

He was tempted to preach the sermon from "The Best Sermons" on his first Sunday morning service. But he said to himself: "No! I'll save that sermon for prayer meeting, no matter how small the crowd is. If I do not take that hour seriously, nobody else ever will."

So the first Sunday he announced that the prayer meeting would be held in the main auditorium of the church instead of in a back room. He announced that he would preach the sermon which had been selected as one of the "Best Sermons of the Year" a few weeks before; that he wanted to give his best to that meeting; that he considered that midweek hour of the most supreme importance; that he prepared for it as carefully as he did for either of his two Sunday services; and that he expected it to be the most

vital service in that church during his ministry. And that was exactly what it became. It was held every week in the main auditorium of the church. He took it seriously; and so did that church; and so will every church take the prayer hour seriously if the preacher does. But if the church detects the preacher palming off on them a "little talk," or if they feel that he is giving that hour—as preachers usually do—the tag ends of his thought and his powers, the prayer meeting will soon become what it usually does become—impotent and unattended. Giving that "Best Sermon" to the prayer meeting crowd in that church the first week was the beginning of one of the largest prayer meetings in America.

The minister who slights an audience, either in his own church or elsewhere, who palms off his left-overs, gives them what Studdert Kennedy calls "cold leg of lamb without any mince sauce" or "weak tea."

"Then give to the world the best you have,
And the best will come back to you.
Give love, and love to your heart will flow,
A strength in your utmost need;
Have faith, and a score of hearts will show
Their faith in your word and deed.
For life is the mirror of king and slave;
'Tis just what you are and do.
Then give to the world the best that you have,
And the best will come back to you!"

Madeline Bridges gave us this challenge to "inner earnestness," and nowhere is it needed so much as in

the attitude of the minister toward his work and his congregation. He must give to that congregation the best that he has if he expects the best to come back to him and to his ministry. He must give at least with as much "inner earnestness," with as much sincerity, with as much honesty as Fred Stone the comedian and Ethel Barrymore give in their profession to their audiences—made up of exactly the same kind of human beings as ours.

When the preacher has attained to this glow and glory of the "inner earnestness" in preaching, there will flow out from him wide streams of power which will make life more beautiful. Men will not know just why it is that they go wistfully to hear him, but they will go just the same, so that, out of his overflow, the deserts of their lives may spring into the flower of a new Faith and a new Hope and a new Cheerfulness.

CHAPTER XIV

RESERVE POWER IN PREACHING

RESERVE power suggests overflow.

Real power suggests that there is more where that came from.

We like to drink from a hillside spring which is overflowing and which suggests that there is a great fountain or stream somewhere deep in the hills from which this spring gets its supply.

Such a spring is always overflowing. It overflows winter and summer. In the Philippines the United States has introduced many changes, but none so practical as the artesian wells which have been drilled all over the islands. As you travel about you see little groups of men, women, and children with buckets huddled around these overflowing and ever-flowing artesian wells. Before the advent of the United States the natives drank water from gutters, pools, and open streams. Disease was rampant. Epidemics were annual scourges. But with the advent of artesian wells disease was conquered.

These wells flow night and day. They are never shut off. There does not seem to be the need of any conservation. They do not need to be turned on and off. They flow like streams night and day. The sound of flowing water is as constant in the island as the wind in the trees, and more so.

There seems to be a great reserve source of supply back of these artesian wells in the Philippines.

There is a suggestion of reserve power in the ocean, in spite of the restless surging of the inshore waves, and the flapping of white caps, and the ripples that run like nervous children along the shore; in spite of the foam that piles itself in masses and breaks with the winds that blow.

Somewhere in that great sea there is reserve power, great lunging, plunging reserve power of mountain wave. Somewhere there is power of tide and tumult. Somewhere there is power of current and stream.

As one stands on the brink of Niagara, in spite of the majestic spill of tumultuous water, in spite of flimsy rainbow mists, in spite of its beauty and curve and grace, in spite of flick and foam, one feels that sense of reserve power—power to run mills and trains; power to light cities and countryside. Niagara has reserve power.

If Niagara does not give you the sense of reserve power at its brink or in the thunder of its descent, go down to the spot where that mighty fall lifts itself skyward in its lunge upward from the depths; go down to the Whirlpool and the rapids, or go down into the mighty turbines.

The great dynamos in the General Electric plant at Schenectady give one a sense of reserve power. They will tell you how much horse power they generate and what great trains they can pull over

mountains and through tunnels. But as you look at these great power plants you feel a sense of electricity in the air, of power everywhere, of power untouched, of power in reserve.

One watches a railroad engine in a great terminal, waiting the signal to launch itself on its transcontinental journey. It is vibrant with power. It is like a dog straining at its leash or a horse eager for the race. It seems almost human, as the steam blows off at the safety valve with the thunder of power in its mighty blast and hiss. One has a feeling that here is power enough to scale the mountain passes and power to spare in that engine. It is so with the average automobile. We have power enough to use and power in reserve ten times more than we can ever use, except in sudden emergencies. The automobile manufacturers are now specializing in their publicity on the "reserve power" of their cars.

I. The Preacher and His Reserve Powers

Robert Louis Stevenson, in spite of his physical frailties, in his great literary productions gave a sense of reserve powers. He never seemed to be petering out, even up to the end of his literary life, in spite of sickness.

There have been powerful preachers with frail bodies, although a strong body is a good asset to begin with. A tall, physically perfect man in the pulpit is an imposing sight, and most of the truly

unforgettable preachers have been men of strong, healthy-looking physiques. But the essential thing is that a man give a sense of mental and spiritual reserve power to his audience. That will overcome any physical handicap that a public speaker may have. A few of the truly great preachers of all time, and some of to-day, have been and are men of frail bodies and small statures.

In spite of physical frailties, in spite of the fact that he was a man doomed to lifelong weakness and final death from tuberculosis, in spite of suffering and pain, Robert Louis Stevenson gave the feeling of reserve strength in all his writings.

The same spirit was true of W. E. Henley, whom Robert Louis Stevenson used as the original of John Silver in "Treasure Island."

Mr. Noyes says: "Henley, the crippled buccaneer, is a vivid figure for many who have never read his works. He was projected into the far future, cutlass at belt and blood-spotted handkerchief about his brow, when Stevenson announced that from the maimed strength of his friend he had drawn the character of John Silver in "Treasure Island."

From early boyhood Henley was tubercular. His hands would rip open at the flesh. Early in life he had to have one foot amputated, and later he was told it was a question between losing the other foot or losing his life.

He had heard of a man named Lister in Edinburgh and went to him. Let Noyes tell it: "There

Henley deposited himself, a strange, silent cripple, with burning eyes and a heart loaded to bursting, in the hands of Lister. 'Why did you come to me?' asked Lister. 'Because I am told by the rest of your profession,' said Henley, 'that you are utterly incompetent.' His biographer tells us that Lister made no reply to this; but he saved the foot."

It was this little crippled man, who had undergone fifty operations, who had lost one leg, who had spent more than five years in hospitals, frail, like a broken rose stock, whom Stevenson chose as a model for his most buccaneering pirate in "Treasure Island." It was this man who wrote that most utterly virile and defiant and vigorous poem of them all, "Invictus," with its defiance to God and man hurled into the face of defeat and disaster.

The power of the public speaker, particularly the minister, lies in giving to a town or a city, to a pulpit or a parlor, to a home or a highway, a sense of reserve mental and spiritual power; to make people have the feeling that "there is more where that came from."

II. How to Create This Sense of Reserve Power

Miss Alice Spalding, a pupil of Dr. Comstock, now a teacher of public speaking in Allegheny College, used to say to me and to other embryo public speakers, who liked to plunge into a public address like a runaway train or a prairie fire, without

pause, without approach, without reservation, without caution or cause: "Hold your horses! Rein in! Throttle down! You must give a sense of having something in reserve. To plunge into a theme like that, as if you were all out of breath with having run from somewhere, gives your audience a sense of pity for you. They want to feel that you are master of your subject, of your emotions, of your powers, and that you are holding most of your powers in reserve for a climax or for something in the future!"

William Allen White expresses the same thought in this phrase, "Keep your shirt on!"

When a certain preacher said to me awhile ago, "Did you ever learn anything from elocution teachers or teachers of public speaking in college or seminary?" I replied: "I learned to hold my horses in public speaking and not to give all I had in the first jump! I learned a sense of reserve in public speaking. I do not know of anything any more important that I could have learned."

Wide reading, wide travel, experience, suffering, study will give that atmosphere of reserve power to a preacher. If he has great overflows in his life and his mind, the audience will feel that sense of reserve power. When one has traveled from Pittsburg to Philadelphia on the Pennsylvania Railroad and has seen the great reservoirs of water; when one has looked upon the great Roosevelt Dam in Arizona; when one has stood beside the great reservoirs of the Mississippi at Keokuk, Iowa; later when he has

tapped the spigot for a tin cup of water—he does not feel any sense of inadequacy in the supply. He feels a great reserve—reservoir—back in the mountains and back at the source.

I heard an aged theological professor say of a certain Boston preacher whom he had just heard speak: "I was astonished at his familarity with literature and science; at his ability to quote from such wide sources and established authorities; at the wide range of his sermon this morning. I came away with the feeling that he had poured out like a mountain stream and yet that there was a reservoir back there somewhere from which he was drawing, which was inexhaustible! I felt that he was prodigal; that he had given us what might have been put into ten sermons. There was a sense of power in his address—reserve power!"

I heard another man say of this preacher, "After hearing him I felt as if I had been somewhere and had seen things and people."

That is exactly what a preacher ought to do for his people every time he preaches. He ought to take them places, and they ought to see things and have a part in great events and meet great spirits.

I attended a vaudeville performance one day, and a girl comedian said to her sister-partner, "I want to go places and meet people!" She reiterated that phrase until it became funny, and the audience convulsed itself over that sentence. But I have not been able to forget it. I have not been able to forget

it, because that is exactly what people ought to experience in every sermon. They ought to go places and meet people.

III. In Order to Create That Sense of Reserve Power One Must Have It

Physical health will give it to a marked degree.

I watched Strangler Lewis and Jack Dempsey work out in their preparation for great bouts. Both of them are now defeated champions, but both of them gave a sense of reserve physical powers. While physical power is not the essential thing for a public speaker, yet that sense of reservoirs of physical energy out of which flow streams of clear, white waters of strength and healing, happiness and health, sunlight and cheerfulness, and expansive personality—all has its place in pulpit power.

The preacher who can leave behind him this sense of health and happiness wherever he goes will always have influence. There is something vitalic about it. It vitalizes an individual or an audience like electricity. It is safe to say that most of the preachers who have commanded great pulpits in all time have been men of abounding physical vitalities, of reservoirs of nervous energy.

But this is not all. There is something more vital than that.

The man who has stored his mind full of information, and then has classified, and codified, and arranged his facts and his thinking; the man who has

the centuries at his finger tips, who can preach his sermons with a clarified and classified background of history, of literature, of science, and of current events—he is the man who will give the sense of reserve power.

The disciplined mind, the untrammeled mind, is the reservoir mind. I have known men who had imperial gold mines of reading and facts, but who did not know how to classify them or rally them to their needs. Their minds were not indexed and disciplined. I know a certain preacher who has the historical events of all time at his command. He got this command of history by putting the centuries up in front of him, with the great personalities and the great events and the great movements of those centuries, on a strip of paper each morning as he shaved. He has some limitations as a public speaker, but one always feels the power of the disciplined mind and the reserve power in his speech in spite of the fact that he is a noted invalid physically.

The minister who has mastered his own mind is the miracle maker in public address. The preacher who has command of his own intellectual processes is the unforgettable public speaker.

But there is something more vital than this.

The man who has lived largely has great power reserves.

Theodore Roosevelt was one of the men who wanted to "live some more!"

One always felt a sense of abundance, of reserve

power in spite of his buccaneering way, when Roosevelt spoke, because, back of his torrent of words—just as it was true that, back of the torrent of words that poured from the lips of Phillips Brooks—there was a wealth of experience, of living and serving and loving humanity,

But more vital even than the things that I have already mentioned is the spiritual life and living of the man of God. If that man lives close to God and can add great spiritual reservoirs to his physical and mental power, to his power of personal charm, he is foreordained, in that sense, to immortality.

An audience will feel the threadbare spiritual garments of a speaker who is presumed to be a spiritual leader; an audience will soon know whether his cupboard is bare like Old Mother Hubbard's. He does not need to define or blue-print or chart or diagram his spiritual poverty. It will be manifest in the very atmosphere of the room; just as the spiritual reservoirs of Maude Royden, or Dr. Charles Jefferson, or Bishop Edwin Holt Hughes, or Roland Hayes are evident to an audience. An audience will know if the man who speaks has "been with God" in meditation and prayer and spiritual preparation.

I always liked, as a boy, to walk up to a moving belt attached to a dynamo in the electrical plant to see the sparks fly from that belt to my knuckle. I like to walk across a room in Buffalo—a room with a wool carpet—and see the blue flame of electrical

power flash from my hands to the door knob, or from the steel window sill when I raise a window at night. There is a surcharged electrical atmosphere in and around Buffalo and Niagara. That is the type of reserve spiritual power that a minister of God ought to throw off into the congregation of a church.

There must be enough power "and to spare" in preaching. The preacher must create an atmosphere of reservoir power.

CHAPTER XV

THE POWER OF PREACHING TO-DAY

WHILE we are talking about reserve power in preaching let us not forget that preaching itself has never had such real power as it has to-day.

My friend James Schermerhorn published, in a popular magazine, an article entitled "Where Has the Church Gone?"

In that article he showed, in his usual interesting journalistic fashion, that the church has gone to the lecture platform, it has gone to the motion pictures, it has gone to the magazines, it has gone into the radio.

The heart of his idea is that in these days religion, the singing of the great hymns, sacred music, preaching, prayers, have gone into the radio program and into motion pictures. He notes that such great sermons as "Ben Hur," "The Ten Commandments," and "The King of Kings" are now being produced by motion picture companies. These sermons formerly were the exclusive property of the church service. He notes that the greatest preachers of to-day are preaching over the radio and that the church has gone into the radio broadcasting business.

Mr. Schermerhorn is right to a certain degree. I

myself have had the glowing experience of having a prayer meeting audience that extended from Saskatchewan, Canada, to Palm Beach, Fla.; from San Antonio to Duluth; from San Francisco to New York City. I know the adventure of receiving letters by hundreds each week because of a prayer meeting radio broadcast in Kansas City, Mo. I know that certain great preachers such as Dr. S. Parkes Cadman, Dan Poling, Burris Jenkins, and others are seriously thinking of devoting their ministries exclusively to a radio audience.

I have read recently in "Life and I," by Gamaliel Bradford, this statement about preaching: "If the Protestant Church is killed, it will be the sermon that has killed it. Yet it is the very power and splendor of this instrument that has caused it to be so misused and abused by those who are quite incapable of handling it. And the effects produced by great preachers in all ages have been so immense that one does not wonder that the church is tempted to place upon preaching a far greater burden than it will bear."

Sure enough it is the day of the motion picture, and we are even now in the birth pangs of the "Talking Movie," which I like to call the "Vocovision." But that does not lessen the power of truly great preaching. It only gives the alert preacher a new medium through which to preach and through which to reach the people. If the alert preacher will use the motion picture and not

abuse it; use it as a vehicle to carry his message; use the great religious dramas that the motion pictures are bringing to the people—he will find that the motion picture has helped rather than hindered him in his ministry. Let us link preaching up with the motion picture world, condemning that which is filthy and commending that which is worthy.

Certainly it is the day of the automobile, and we are also in the birth pangs of the airplane; but that does not hurt the power of truly great preaching. I am fairly familiar with American preaching and American preachers, and I could cite you an instance in every great city in this nation where some great preacher—a man who can truly preach—has had his audiences and his power tripled because of the automobile. I know of preachers in metropolitan areas who have congregations that come from a radius of fifty miles every Sunday to hear real preaching. The automobile has done this. It has not injured the power of the truly great preacher; it has enhanced his power. It has made it possible for men and women by thousands to come great distances to hear him because of adequate and quick transportation. I have in mind such men as Dr. Merton Rice of Detroit, Dr. Burris Jenkins of Kansas City, Dr. Lynn Harold Hough, formerly of Detroit. The audiences of these great city preachers come from an average of twenty-five miles to

fill great city auditoriums to hear these great city preachers each Sunday.

Most assuredly the day of radio preaching has come. But I do not know of a single instance where the fact that a man is preaching over the radio has injured his drawing power in his regular church service. In fact, it enhances that drawing power because it is the best kind of publicity, as the great advertising companies are discovering. The great radio preacher never has any lack of an audience when he preaches in person. Dr. S. Parkes Cadman is by all odds the finest lyceum, Chautauqua, or preaching attraction in America, and wherever he goes there are great crowds thronging to hear him. *Why?* Because the radio has made people curious to see and hear him. The radio has enhanced and not injured the power of Dr. S. Parkes Cadman.

This is true in the case of men all over America who use the radio. In all cases their churches are crowded. When people in small towns come to a city where there is a preacher whom they have heard on the radio they want to go to his church and hear him personally. This is true of Dr. Burris Jenkins and Dr. Hargett in Kansas City, of Dr. Frederick Shannon in Chicago, of Dr. Poling, Dr. Cadman, and Dr. Jefferson in New York.

In addition to this the radio gives the truly great preacher an increased audience, so vast that it is impossible even for experts to compute it. It is necessary for the average radio preacher to have an

extra secretary to answer the letters that pour into his office in floods after a Sunday sermon over the radio.

I. Bishops Tell Us That the People Are Now Asking for Preachers First

During the last five months I have been making a little experiment. I wrote to twenty-five bishops of the Methodist Church, to twenty-five editors, to twenty-five of the leading preachers, and to twenty-five leading laymen. I asked them to name the first five requisites of a preacher in the order of their importance. I asked the bishops to tell me what churches require of a minister; what is the first requirement? Do they want business administrators, or social talents, visitors, or preachers?

For several years past the churches of America have been asking for business efficiency in their ministers. They have not emphasized the preaching requirements of a candidate. They have asked for men who would be good pastors, first of all, and preaching was a secondary matter. In fact, preaching had slipped down into third place in many instances. They wanted good business men and good pastors.

We were in the midst of the Centenary Campaigns, the World-Service organizations, Efficiency Conferences; and the church believed that what it needed and what it wanted was a business executive

when it called a preacher. The current words to describe the type of a man the churches wanted were: Efficient, business, money-raiser, good executive, young people's worker. But that has all changed in the last ten years.

Most of the so-called Efficiency Campaigns, the great Missionary Money-Raising Projects, and the World-Service Movements have failed. If the tragic story were told truthfully, if the Church and the world knew the great black burdens of debt that grew like mushrooms in the dark cellars and the darker night of that period, they would shudder with terror. Several of the great Church denominations are still paying hundreds of thousands of dollars every year on "dead horses" that came out of this so-called Efficiency Era.

The Church has been disillusioned with Efficiency and Business Promotion and World-Service Organizations.

Almost unanimously the bishops to whom I wrote tell me that the church committees who come to them are asking first of all for preachers. They are not asking for Young People's Workers, for Educational Directors, for Efficiency Experts, for Money-Raisers, for good Executives. They are asking for preachers. "We must have a man who can preach, or we are gone! We laymen will attend to the money-raising. Give us a preacher, or we die."

The twenty-five editors to whom I wrote came back with the same testimony. I wrote to them

because they are the gossips of the Church. Into their offices all over America the gossip of the Church filters. They feel the pulse of the Church. They know its temperature and its desires. It was their almost unanimous opinion that what the Church is asking for to-day is preachers—men who can set congregations on fire with a passion for religion; men who can command the respect of their communities as great speakers.

With only five exceptions the laymen to whom I wrote put preaching as the first requirement. And, when it is remembered that these Pulpit Supply Committees, made up entirely of laymen, make the final decision about the ministers, it will be seen that this evidence is important. These men write to say, "We want a preacher first of all; a man who can stir our hearts and bring us back to the Church and to the basic truth." One man said: "The Church is dying with efficiency and money-raising; and we must have preaching. We are scouring the nation for a preacher."

The preachers themselves—the twenty-five leading ministers to whom I wrote—said the same thing. I wrote to men of different denominations in this group. I tried to get the honest opinion of twenty-five of the leading preachers of the United States, and almost unanimously they said: "The people want preaching as never before in my days. They want—not a business administrator, but an inter-

preter of God and Christ and the Bible. They are hungry for truth."

The five requirements that churches, laymen, bishops, church pulpit supply committees, and editors require, in the order of their standing, judging from these one hundred letters run in this fashion:

1. Preaching.
2. Pastors (men who will visit the flock.)
3. Business Administrators.
4. Young People's Workers.
5. Educational Directors.

The day has almost gone when the chief emphasis is being put on business efficiency, organization, athletics, educational equipment, and administration. We are coming into an era of great preaching, and the radio has had much to do with this change.

II. The Most Distinctive Position in the Program of the Modern Church is for Preaching

Dr. Charles R. Brown in "The Art of Preaching" says just the opposite of Gamaliel Bradford, "The fate of our Protestant Christianity is, in my judgment, bound up in large measure with the rise and fall of effective preaching."

Sylvester Horne in "The Romance of Preaching" says: "The word 'sermon' has sometimes had an uninviting sound. It has not always been associated with the melting of the mists and the vision of the

infinite blue. Sometimes it is to be feared that it has made the mists more dense, impenetrable, and chill. We are not so prejudiced as to deny the fact. But, rightly understand, mankind lives and grows on great sermons; and in no other way. Sublime thoughts, high and holy conceptions of life and death and duty; lofty interpretations of nature and experience, the light that reveals God upon the scene, and that dignifies and glorifies human nature —here is the substance of those great sermons that enter into men's souls and make them sons of God and brothers of humanity."

The day of great preaching is not past. We have our Cadmans, our Charles Jeffersons, our Joseph Fort Newtons, our Gaius Glen Atkinses, our Burris Jenkinses, our Frederick Shannons, our Lynn Harold Houghs, our Robert Freemans, our Merton Rices, our Bishop Francis J. McConnells, our Bishop McDowells, our Edwin Holt Hugheses, our Campbell Morgans—and others.

There are more great preachers in our very day than there were in the days of the Wesleys, in the days of the Joseph Parkers, in the days of the Beechers, and the days of the Phillip Brookses. I challenge any man to produce evidence to the contrary. We have more truly great preachers to-day, men who stand out above the skyline of their kind, "large heroic fellows," men who command the respect of audiences, men who can attract vast throngs, men who have power over the radio, "men to match our

mountains and our seas," than any other single age has produced; men who will survive the ravages of time and go down into history as truly great preachers. The day of great preaching and of great preachers is not past. We are in its noontime.

When we think of the counter-attractions, the motion pictures, the radio, the automobile, the airship, the telephone, the world-on-wheels, men go to church more now than they have ever gone to church. People go to hear preaching to-day by millions where they used to go by thousands. This is also largely due to the radio.

When we go down to the offices and stores on Monday morning, we hear more people talking about sermons and talking religion than we have heard in any other generation of humankind. There is hardly an issue of a magazine in this day that does not contain a religious article. Even some of the so-called yellow journal syndicates have a policy of employing a preacher in every city to write for them. Why? Because they sense the public tastes. They know that the public of to-day is interested in religion and preaching.

People like to hear the human voice. They like to see the man who is speaking to them. They like to be swayed by his presence as well as by his voice. The Vocovision proves this. It is here to stay. Crude as it is, we like to hear it. The news reels that show us the picture and give us the voice are to-day the popular reels in every American city. The

human voice has not lost its power over humanity. From the days of Demosthenes the human voice, the public speaker, the orator, has swayed the human mind, and it will continue to do so as long as human nature is what it is. The day of great preaching and great preachers has not passed.

III. The Market for Books of Sermons Is Growing

There has never been such a public interest in books of sermons as there has been during the years since the World War. Almost every publisher of note has been publishing books of sermons. I know of one publishing house which has several of America's most popular fiction writers on its catalogue; and yet I happen to know that for several years the Religious Catalogue of that publishing house was the only department that actually made any money.

"Great Southern Preaching," "The Best Sermons" of each year, "If I Had Only One Sermon to Preach" issued in both an English and an American series, "The Twenty-Five Most Useful Preachers in America," and a score of other books of sermons have been published and are continuing to be published. Why? Because the public is interested in preaching.

I happen to know that Mr. Edwin Markham has been lured into this field. He has in the course of

preparation two books, one on Jesus and the other to be entitled "Princes of the Christian Pulpit."

Not only is there an increasing interest in books of sermons, but there is also an increasing interest in the personalities of the preachers themselves, and consequently we have a flood of books about preachers and preaching. I have been watching the book world now for ten years, and I have never seen such an avalanche of books about preachers, their ways of working, their sermons, their opinions, their problems, their personalities. Magazines are publishing stories about preachers. Preachers are "News" on the City Editor's desk. The Yale Lectures which have been running for years still attract attention every year, and a score of other such lectures are published every year in the United States. I know of fifty such that I could name here if there was space—foundations established for preaching series in colleges and cities such as the Lyman Beecher Lectures at Yale.

This month I have classified in the current magazines (March, 1929) more than two hundred articles dealing with preachers and preaching. We find that newspapers are not only syndicating sermons, but they are filling their Monday morning issues with sermons and sermon quotations. Why? Because they feel the pulse of the public interest, and they know that people are interested in preaching as never before. They want put down in black and white the sermon they heard over the radio the day

before or the sermon they heard in some church. One magazine is running "The Sermon of the Month" regularly; another magazine is publishing debates between ministers on religious themes; one magazine is publishing a series of articles by great clergymen on the Church, and this magazine has been running for many months at least one religious article every month, and these articles have been attracting nation-wide attention.

Nothing will attract so much attention to-day—not even a prize fight—as a debate between two great preachers on Fundamentalism and Modernism. The daily newspapers follow such debates and carry front page stories of the results, round by round.

"Where has the Church gone?" my friend James Schermerhorn asks.

I answer him: "It has gone to church, and it has gone to church as it has never gone before. It has gone in greater numbers, it has gone with greater eagerness, it has gone to church in its own home; and then it has gone to see and hear the man it has learned to respect and love over the radio. It has gone with a wistful hunger in its heart, but it has gone—it has gone as never before. It has gone to church and to hear preaching in its newspapers, over its radio, in its favorite magazine, through its books of sermons. It has gone to hear great preaching· and if it cannot get its great preaching in its

particular local church, it has found great preaching elsewhere. But it has not lost interest in preaching.

Sylvester Horne says that great preaching "has kept the soul of the world alive." That is its mission to-day, and it is doing it magnificently. Even the most hard-boiled, *blasé* radio listener knows that the only hope for the radio program itself is the one institution—the sermon—that is absolutely free from the wrangle of jazz and the nightmare of promotion. I have heard it said a thousand times: "The only decent thing that comes over our radio is the preaching. I get so sick of jazz and advertising that I look forward to Sunday to hear preaching and the singing of hymns." This seems to be a universal plaint, a universal need, and a universal joy. Which makes me feel that I have a right to say—if for no other reason, because of the radio—that the day of great preaching is not past; it is at its high noon.

CHAPTER XVI

OUT OF THE OVERFLOW FROM GREAT BOOKS

Books bulge back the world's horizon for both preacher and audience.

Books help to keep the soul of the world alive for the preacher who preaches and the congregation which has to listen.

> "Books are ladders up which climb
> Human hearts to heights sublime."

There can be no real overflow in preaching that does not come from a wide and ever-widening familiarity with the great classics in literature and the current books of sterling worth.

George Macdonald in "Annals of a Quiet Neighborhood" says of the preacher who reads books: "I never could believe that a man who did not find God in other places as well as in the Bible ever found him there at all. And I always thought that to find God in other books enabled us to see clearly that he was more in the Bible than in any other book, or all other books put together."

I know of no better figure of speech with which to open this chapter than the figure of Old Faithful Geyser, although I admit the possibility of calumny in this figure. Old Faithful, like all geysers, has a

great subterranean cavern, and leading from this cavern is a long narrow outlet to the surface. When the cavern fills up from some deep, deep underground source of supply, it overflows into a great, spectacular, rainbow-tinted, white column of beauty and force.

The preacher who does not fill his mind from some deep, deep source of supply will never overflow.

Bacon says: "Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man. And, therefore, if a man write little, he had need have a great memory; if he confer little, he had need of a present wit; and if he read little, he had need have much cunning to seem to know that he doth not know."

Apelles, a most celebrated Greek painter, said, "Never a day without a line."

Bishop William A. Quayle said to me, "I read a book a day regularly."

Theodore Roosevelt, throughout a continuously busy life, read a book a day. He himself said: "I make it a point never to go to sleep without having read a book that day. Usually I have to steal time just before I turn in, but often between interviews, when I am supposed to be concerned with the affairs of state, I pick up a book and read a chapter before starting my next interview."

A friend of mine found an old book, on the cover of which was scribbled a startling covenant, which sounds like the ordination to books that a minister

ought to take, "I, John Brown, will buy books, God helping me."

Bishop William F. McDowell, of Washington, D. C., told me one day that when he went off to college he sought advice from an older minister, who told him little about what clothes to wear, less about money, but a lot about what books to buy. He advised him to buy Porter's "Books and Reading" and every book like it that appeared thereafter.

Bishop McDowell also said to me, "I always pass on to young preachers the advice of Austin Phelps, 'Wear the old coat, but buy the new book!'"

I. The Power and the Overflow of Nugget Quotations

Single line quotations in a sermon are like gold nuggets gleaned from an imperial gold mine of great literature.

Single line quotations are like attar of roses, the essence of a great man's thoughts distilled from forty thousand rose petals to make a single drop.

Single lines are like the sky reflected in a raindrop.

We have a famous single line quotation which perfectly describes what a single line quotation is to a sermon, "All in a nutshell."

Channing Pollock says:

> A single line will oft outlive a marble temple.

There is no more power impact possible than that of a great single line shot from a speaker's lips and

heart into the heart of a listening audience, as John McNeil says, "It struck, and it stuck."

I illustrate from Thomas Carlyle:

Man! Stands he not at the center of Immensities; at the conflux of eternities!

From Emerson:

Trust Thyself! Every heart vibrates to that iron string!

From John Drinkwater:

And Lincoln was the lord of his event!

From Vachel Lindsay in his poem on Lincoln:

Would I might rouse the Lincoln in you all!

From Edwin Markham's great Lincoln Poem:

And leaves a lonesome place against the sky.

The Symphonic Theme vehicle is powerful because it takes two lines, or four at most, and sings them into the heart of an audience, with an impact that makes an unforgettable impression.

"Kill me none may; conquer me, nothing can—
I am God's soul, fused in the soul of man."
—*Ella Heath.*

"Upon the wastes a lifeless clod
I lay, I heard the voice of God."
—*Alexander Pushkin.*

"I took a day to search for God;
I saw his footprints in the sod."
—*Bliss Carman.*

"O God! My God! My Own!
And I do not stand alone!"
—*Charlotte Perkins Gilman.*

"And still that Guardian Watcher keeps
A chart of all the heights and deeps."

—*Bruce Moore.*

These quotations of Symphonic Themes could be continued indefinitely, but these will serve to illustrate the impact they have on the mind and soul.

I had a curious illustration of the impression that these brief Symphonic Themes make the very week that I am writing this.

One of the boys in my classes had asked me to preach for him the evening of Mother's Day. That morning he himself had preached a Symphonic Sermon on these two lines:

"O *Mother*, when I think of thee,
'Tis but a step to *Calvary*."

That evening when I arrived and we were having dinner together I asked my student what he had preached about that morning. He hesitated only the fraction of a second when his five-year-old son piped up, "About Calvary and Muver!"

That five-year-old child had caught the heart of that sermon because of the Symphonic Refrain.

I had a mother come up to me in Philadelphia a few months ago, holding by the hand a seven-year-old boy. When that boy was five years old he was brought to church in Detroit. He had heard several of the Symphonic Sermons. That morning in Philadelphia the proud mother brought him up to quote three or four of the Symphonic Refrains that he has remembered for two years.

"They struck, and they stuck!" says Dr. McNeil. They always will. There is an impact about the Symphonic Theme which sticks in the soul.

Then there is the impact of single lines used as illustrations. The shorter they are, the better.

From "Beggars' Gold," Earnest Poole, I remember:

> Then there came intimations of thrilling powers within himself—deep, deep inside like buried springs!

Or another from the same book:

> Something in him poured up like fire and light. Amid the narrow tenement streets he felt a new immensity!

Or again that great phrase expressing a great emotional upheaval with the coming of love:

> I may look like a boarding house, but by God I've got a China inside of me!

Or again from a quotation showing the influence of a great teacher:

> "At last he taught us to open great windows! 'Look!' he cried,
> 'And we would see—far off to the Western world—and far down into our own souls!'"

Lorado Taft has given us several great single sentences in his books on the history of American sculpture:

> If we sculptors could but learn that the most precious asset of our art is its hint of eternity!

He also says, in speaking of a great work of a great artist:

> It is significant that one of his last thoughts should be an expression of the soul in its untrammeled flight.

From a book called "The Glass of Fashion" I take several quotations to illustrate what I mean by the impact of single lines in preaching:

> We are talking nonsense on the edge of an abyss.

With that single line the "Gentleman with a Duster" designates this age. In another line he sums it up in this way:

> It is a drift age.

He also tells of a certain man who was writing of the war as a man:

> With a worm's eye view of the world.

To sum up this impact-making suggestion in the use of single lines in sermons may I quote Dr. John Kelman from "Prophets of Yesterday:"

> Yet, be sure, a single beautiful line of poetry has wrought the world more good than all the masterpieces of mechanism.

Dr. Kelman is here quoting Anatole France.

II. The Place of Poetry in Preaching

Poetry is the language of the spiritual.

The Bible is a book of poetry from beginning to end.

The most popular book in the Bible is the Psalms —all poetry.

Every child lisps rhyme. God does make poets of us all when we have religion in our hearts.

The great preachers have learned the secret power of poetry in their preaching. Bishop William A. Quayle started the vibrations of poetry singing in

the hearts of his audiences. He was one of the great irresistible preachers of the past generation, and the secret of his preaching was rhythm and rhyme. One needs but to study the great preachers of the past and the great preachers to-day, and there will be revealed to the investigator the fact that they know how to use the poets, either in direct quotation or their thoughts.

The poets are preachers in themselves and in their own rights.

Shelley sings it:

> "Poets are the trumpets which sing to battle.
> Poets are the acknowledged legislators of the world."

They are more than that—these Tennysons, Brownings, Shakespeares, Miltons, Markhams, Millays, Lindsays; they are the "Poet Preachers" of all time.

What preacher can saturate himself with an "In Memoriam," with a "Pippa Passes," with "The Everlasting Mercy," with "How the Great Guest Came," and not have an overflow in his preaching which will spill into the lives of his hearers with a blessing like a summer rain on a dry and thirsty land and life?

My ministry has been greatly blessed by Edna St. Vincent Millay from "Renascence" to "The Buck in the Snow." I have found countless nugget sermon-thoughts, Symphonic Themes, and quotations to illustrate other and separate thoughts from "Renascence" itself. There is an overflow of beauty

and feeling in this great narrative poem which will enrich any man's life and ministry. It is tragic loss to me for any preacher not to know "Renascence."

I feel the same way about Edwin Markham's "The Shoes of Happiness," a book which has four or five great narrative poems on religious themes and a section called "Script for the Journey" which contains several short poems, every single one of which is a sermon thought in itself.

No richer poet preacher writes to-day than Edwin Markham. He is the preacher poet at its supreme flowering.

Markham and his narrative poems, Markham and his "Script for the Journey," Markham and his couplets for Symphonic Themes, Markham and his Christian viewpoint, Markham and his Life of Christ which he is writing—these set him aside as one of the Poet Princes of the Christian Pulpit. The preacher of to-day who does not know Edwin Markham is a beggar sitting on bags of gold.

John Masefield is our Preacher Poet with his "The Everlasting Mercy," "The Window in the Bye Street," "The Dauber," "Hell Hounds," and a score of others. He is our ally. Noyes is a gold mine for the alert preacher in such poems as "Watchers of the Sky," "The Book of Earth," "Tales of Old Japan," etc.

Particularly does this scientific and machine age need poetry. If we preachers fail in this age to

carry the torch of poetry to humanity, we leave them in impenetrable spiritual darkness.

The people not only need poetry in this age, but they are wistful for it. They love it. They respond to it. It works. It lures them. It fascinates an audience.

The preacher who uses poetry is sure of a hearing to-day. Dr. Frederick Shannon tells me that he never gives a talk over the radio; that he does not quote a poem, but that he always gets an immediate response through the mails. The people are hungry for poetry.

Boccaccio, Dante's biographer, says, "Theology is nothing else than the poetry of God."

Some one has said that "prophesy means to bubble up; to overflow."

What immortal sermons there are summed up in Markham's "Outwitted":

> "He drew a circle that shut me out—
> Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout;
> But Love and I had the wit to win:
> We drew a circle that took him in."

Or what an impact this four-line poem called "A Creed" has:

> "Here is the truth in a little creed—
> Enough for all the roads we go;
> In love is all the law we need,
> In Christ is all the God we know."

What a sermon is packed into Hay's few lines quoted here:

"I don't stack up on the prophets, free will, and that sort of thing,
But I've believed in God and the angels, ever since one night last spring."

What a sermon on the theme, "At eventide it shall be light," there is in this couplet:

"The stream is calmest when it nears the tide,
And flowers are sweetest at the eventide.'

No man can feed the sheep if he himself has not been fed.

No preacher can overflow from his pulpit, with a refreshing stream to water the desert land of the lives of his people, if he himself has not been filling up some way during the week.

Out of the overflow reading of great dramas, great novels, great nonfiction books, great books of poetry, history, art, music, astronomy, and great books of science comes great preaching, but more particularly helpful are the Poet Preachers of the literary world.

CHAPTER XVII

PREACHING THROUGH NATURE

CORRA HARRIS says that "nature is God's green growing Scriptures."

Out of a full heart, out of a full consciousness of this truth, out of the fountain-like overflow of this feeling some men preach to their congregations all the year around, interpreting God through nature; and more particularly during the spring, summer, and fall days.

> "He loveth most who loveth best
> All things both great and small;
> For the dear God who maketh us,
> He made and loveth all,"

was one of Bishop William A. Quayle's favorite quotations and favorite homiletical philosophies.

He was a man who found God in nature and was able to make others see God through tree, flower, stream, mountain peak, sea, and sunshine.

> "Earth's crammed with heaven,
> And every common bush aflame with God;
> But only he who sees takes off his shoes."

This is another interpretation of the truth I bring that preachers who are preaching out of a real overflow will know that "earth's crammed with heaven" and will know that "every common bush" is "aflame with God."

Even the poets of old saw God everywhere in nature, and a "flaming bush" was a blossoming red bush in springtime.

> "Little flower in the crannied wall,
> I pluck you out of the crannies.
> If I knew what you are, root and all
> And all in all,
> I would know what God and man is."

Tennyson sings it for us too; the great truth that God is found in nature.

I. The Bible and Nature

The Bible, among other things, is a great Nature book.

John Muir, or John Burroughs, or Henry Thoreau would feel—and did feel—at home in the Bible.

If you were to take every reference to Nature, every figure of speech, every parable and poem and symbol intending to teach spiritual truth through Nature out of the Bible, it would be like a honeycomb with the honey drained from it.

The great events of the Bible, with a few exceptions, occurred in out-of-door settings, from Genesis to Revelation. Beginning with the story of creation and ending with the visions of Patmos, framed in Nature settings, the Biblical story runs like a great stream through a desert land to make that land blossom as the rose.

The great figures of speech of the Bible are Nature figures; most of the books of the Bible are Nature

books, including Genesis, Ruth, Song of Solomon, Job, the Psalms, Revelation, and others. We find herein such figures of speech as Shepherd, Fisherman, Sowers, Tree Trimmers

In the life of the great characters from Moses to John of Patmos the great events, from the Drama of Sinai to the Drama of Patmos, were out-of-door scenes. From the birth of Jesus to the Ascension we see a browned, tanned, bronzed, out-of-door man walking and talking along the streams and hillsides of the Holy Land, from dawn until starlight

Born in a manger, dying on a cross, ascending from a little hill, we find the life of Jesus framed in the out of doors. The great Miracles and Parables were mostly out-of-door events: Feeding the Five Thousand, the scenes along the Jordan and Galilee; the Hill of Temptation, the Sermon on the Mount, the giving of the Lord's Prayer, Calvary, Gethsemane.

When I visited the Holy Land I did not seem able to find Jesus nor his trails in any of the accepted shrines of the Holy Land. They had been too much commercialized. They were foreign to the spirit of Jesus. The Catholic Church has desecrated them too much for them to be real.

But when I walked in the fields, along the hillsides and valleys, and down the timeless trails the people have tramped from century to century, out under the stars, in the garden, then and there I felt

that I had found Jesus. I expressed it in a little verse which I call "Judean Hills Are Holy":

"Judean hills are holy,
Judean fields are fair,
For one can find the footprints
Of Jesus everywhere.

One finds them in the twilight
Beneath the singing sky
Where shepherds watch in wonder
White planets wheeling by.

His trails are down the hillsides
And down the dales and deeps;
He walks the high horizons
Where vesper-silence sleeps.

He haunts the lowly highways
Where human hopes have trod,
The Via Dolorosa,
Up to the heart of God.

He looms, a lonely figure
Along the fringe of night,
As lonely as a cedar
Against the lonely light.

Judean hills are holy,
Judean fields are fair,
For one can find the footprints
Of Jesus everywhere."

I have tried to express it even more directly in "Christ Was the Out-Door Son of God":

"My Master was a man who knew
The rush of rain, the drip of dew,
The wistful whisper of the breeze,
Night's magic and its mysteries.

He was a man of sun and stars;
He knew the Pleiades and Mars,
That star-trail called the "Milky Way,"
The crescent moon, the dawn, the day.

His feet were stained by dusty ways,
His cheeks were brown as autumn days;
His skin it had the look of one
Who knew the blazing balm of sun.

He walked alone upon the sea,
Spake peace to wave-washed Galilee;
All shores and seas were in his thought—
This man, God-bred, Star-led, Sky-taught.

Choirs, chanting at the heavenly hymns,
He heard among the lofty limbs
Of Cæsar's singing cedar trees:
God's heavenly harps and harmonies.

To him there were no sweeter tones
Than water washing over stones;
To him no splendid symphony
Like murmuring blue Galilee.

His hair and heart were washed by showers;
He loved the wayside fields and flowers;
The sea and sun, the star and sod;
He was the Outdoor Son of God."

II. Preachers Who Have Recognized the Overflow Possibilities of Finding God in Nature

Dr. Charles Jefferson has a book of Nature sermons in recent years which has been a beautiful revelation of the possibility of preaching God through Nature.

One of the most effective preachers in the last

generation was Bishop William A. Quayle. Beginning with his great book, "In God's Out of Doors," his entire ministry was framed in books of Nature, his last book being "A Book of Clouds." In between these two books over a quarter of a century came "Beside Lake Beautiful," "The Book of Ruth," "The Prairie and the Sea," "With Earth and Sky," "God's Calendar," "The Healing Shadow," and "Out of Doors with Jesus."

Here was a man who could draw and hold vast audiences of people anywhere in America, who had a charm about his preaching which was nothing short of prophetic, a man of irresistible tug and pull. And he literally saturated his sermons with an interpretation of God through Nature.

Those who knew him know that he "found God in Nature," know that to him earth was crammed with heaven and "every common bush" was "aflame with God."

He knew with Corra Harris that "Nature was God's green growing Scriptures."

I have studied his books—every word of them over and over; I heard him innumerable times during his life; I visited him; I loved him—and I believe that one of his greatest powers was the power of seeing God everywhere in Nature. One of the most effective vehicles of his great preaching was that of finding God in the great overflow of the beautiful in the world.

We have other preachers who saw God in Nature.

True enough, they are not ordained ministers according to the Church, but they have been chosen by God as his prophets through whom to reveal his beauty just as God chose the prophets of old for this purpose.

God reveals himself to us through Nature, and these are some of his prophets: John Muir, with his twelve volumes of Nature books; John Burroughs, who is particularly rich as an interpreter of Nature, although Bishop Quayle said of him," "He knew the Garden, but never found the Gardener"; J. H. Fabre, who knew "The Heavens"; Enos A. Mills, who knew the mountains; the great French Flammarion, who knew the stars; Maurice Maeterlinck, who knows the Bees; Gene Stratton Porter, who knew the birds and flowers and trees of Limberlost and "The Birds of the Bible"; and Dallas Lore Sharp, who knows "The Spirit of the Hive."

No preacher is versatile enough to leave these out of his ministry; no preacher has attained the highest pinnacle of revealing God to man who sets aside the vehicle—the sky-flown vehicle—of preaching a revelation of God through Nature.

III. The Hymns of the Church and Nature

I need not pause long on this division of my thesis, that the great hymns of the Church teach their spiritual truths through Nature symbolism. All I need to do is to challenge my readers to turn to any hymn book and pick out his own favorite hymn or

the favorite hymns of humanity the centuries through, and he will find that those hymns have selected figures of speech from Mother Nature to teach spiritual truth, hymns such as:

1. "Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me."
2. "Jesus, Saviour, Pilot Me Over Life's Tempestuous Sea."
3. "Lead, Kindly Light."
4. "Softly Now the Light of Day."
5. "Jesus, Lover of My Soul."

Go through the hymn book and test my thesis.

Sometimes you will find a half dozen symbols and figures from Nature in a single hymn.

I am going to take a few of these hymns in the order in which they appear in the Methodist Hymn Book, that I may illustrate the use of nature symbolism. The first one is No. 59, an Evening Hymn:

"Now the *day is over*,
Night is drawing nigh;
Shadows of the evening
Steal across the *sky*."

In the first stanza of this beautiful hymn every single line has a figure of speech from Nature. They are "Day," "Night," "Shadows," and "Sky."

In the third verse of this great hymn, the author turns to the sea and to sailors for his figure of speech:

"Grant to little children
Visions bright of thee,
Guard the *sailors tossing*
On the *deep blue sea*."

In the fifth and sixth verses, nearly every line has some symbolism of Nature beautifully woven into its texture:

"Through the long *night watches*
May thine angels spread
Their *white wings* above me,
Watching round my bed.

When the morning wakens,
Then may I arise
Pure, and fresh, and stainless
In thy holy eyes."

GUIDE ME, O THOU GREAT JEHOVAH

The second hymn is also full of the symbolism of Nature. Each one of the three beautiful stanzas has its outstanding and different figure of speech, selected from the world of Nature, to teach its spiritual truths. I have underscored each of them:

"Guide me, O thou great Jehovah,
Pilgrim through this *barren land:*
I am weak, but thou art mighty;
Hold me with thy powerful hand;
Bread of heaven,
Feed me till I want no more.

Open now the *crystal fountain,*
Whence the healing *waters flow;*
Let the fiery, cloudy pillar
Lead me all my journey through:
Strong Deliverer,
Be thou still my strength and shield.

When I tread the *verge of Jordan,*
Bid my anxious fears subside;
Bear me through the *swelling current;*
Land me safe on Canaan's side:
Songs of praises
I will ever give to thee!"

To one who loves the world of Nature this study of the hymnology of the Church is a delightful and a startling revelation. The above hymn is an illlustration of how much of Nature symbolism we sing and hardly know it, as it true also of the next which I use:

"THERE'S A WIDENESS IN GOD'S MERCY" (NO. 98)

The whole symbolism of this beautifully tender hymn comes from the sea, and yet even in this hymn other similes of Nature are used:

"There's a wideness in God's mercy
Like the wideness of *the sea;*
There's a kindness in his justice
Which is more than liberty."

Even the last verse turns to the great sun for its figure:

"If our love were but more simple,
We should take him at his word;
And our lives would be *all sunshine*
In the sweetness of our Lord."

Certainly one of the most popular hymns in the Church world is "Rock of Ages," and its entire structure, title, and symbolism are from the world of Nature:

"*Rock of Ages*, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee;
Let the *water* and the blood,
From thy wounded side which *flowed*,
Be of sin the double cure,
Save from wrath and make me pure."

A hymn which runs "Rock of Ages" a close race

for first place in the affections of people in the Church is "Nearer, My God, to Thee" (No. 315), and it also draws abundantly and often from the beautiful world of Nature to teach its spiritual tenderness:

"Though like a wanderer,
The sun gone down,
Darkness be over me,
My rest a *stone,*
Yet in my dreams I'd be
Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee!

Or if, on joyful *wing*
Cleaving the *sky,*
Sun, moon, and stars forgot,
Upward I *fly,*
Still all my song shall be,
Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee!"

One of the most tender hymns of the Church is No. 325, "Break Thou the Bread of Life," and it too is rich with beautiful nature symbolism:

"Break Thou the Bread of Life,
Dear Lord, to me,
As thou didst break the loaves
Beside the *sea;*
Beyond the sacred page
I seek thee, Lord;
My spirit pants for thee,
O living Word.

Bless thou the truth, dear Lord,
To me, to me,
As thou didst bless the bread
By Galilee;

Then shall all bondage cease,
All fetters fall;
And I shall find my peace,
My All-in-All."

I have not used "Bread" as a Nature figure, although it might well be called one. I have used only these figures from Nature that are entirely apparent without any stretching of the imagination.

In the next hymn, which is "Pass Me Not" (No. 329), the last verse contains two Nature figures:

"Thou the *spring* of all my comfort,
More than life to me;
Whom have I on earth beside thee?
Whom in heaven but thee?"

In the next hymn, which was McKinley's favorite, "Lead, Kindly Light," not only the title takes its name from Nature, but many of the lines:

"Lead, kindly *Light*, amid th' encircling *gloom*,
Lead thou me on!
The *night is dark*, and I am far from home;
Lead thou me on!
Keep thou my feet; I do not ask to see
The distant *scene;* one *step* enough for me.

I was not ever thus, nor prayed that thou
Shouldst lead me on;
I loved to choose and see my *path;* but now
Lead thou me on!
I loved the garish *day*, and, spite of fears,
Pride ruled my will. Remember not past years!

So long thy power hath blest me, sure it still
Will lead me on
O'er *moor and fen*, o'er *crag and torrent*, till
The *night* is gone,
And with the *morn* those angel faces smile.
Which I have loved long since and lost awhile."

Fourteen Nature figures in that great hymn, and six in the last stanza. It gets to be a thrilling adventure, this adventure of searching for the trees, the seas, the twilights, dawns, starry skies, and storms of the great hymns. In that great Portuguese Hymn, "How Firm a Foundation," we find a perfect gold mine of Nature figures:

"In every condition—in sickness, in health;
In poverty's *vale*, or abounding in wealth;
At home and abroad; on the *land*, on the *sea*—
'As thy days may demand, shall thy strength ever be!"

"When through the *deep waters* I call thee to go,
The *rivers* of woe shall not thee *overflow;*
For I will be with thee thy troubles to bless,
And sanctify to thee thy *deepest* distress."

That ever-tender hymn, "Sweet Hour of Prayer," turns to the world of Nature for some of its most spiritual figures of speech, as witness the last phrase of the first stanza:

"In *seasons* of distress and grief,
My soul has often found relief
And oft escaped the tempter's *snare*
By thy return, sweet hour of prayer."

The second stanza uses the figure of a bird's wings:

"Sweet hour of prayer, sweet hour of prayer,
Thy *wings* shall my petition bear
To Him, whose truth and faithfulness
Engage the waiting soul to bless."

Then comes the last stanza with its mountain figures:

"Sweet hour of prayer, sweet hour of prayer,
May I thy consolation share,
Till, from *Mount Pisgah's lofty height,*
I view my home and take my *flight:*
This robe of flesh I'll drop, and rise,
To seize the everlasting prize;
And shout, while passing through the *air,*
Farewell, farewell, sweet hour of prayer!"

I might use, as an illustration of what I mean, even the titles of some of the other great hymns of the Church, and prove to my readers just how regnant with the symbolism of Nature the great hymns are, and just how dependent the writers of the great hymns have been on the out of doors for figures of speech to teach their spiritual lessons. I cite:

Abide with me! Fast falls the *eventide.*

Again as *evening's shadow* falls.

At *even,* ere the *sun was set.*

Awake, my soul, and with the *sun.*

Beauteous are the *flowers* of earth.

By cool Siloam's *shady* rill.

Come, thou *Fount* of every blessing.

Come unto Me, when *shadows* darkly fall.

Day is dying in the *west.*

Fierce raged the *tempest* o'er.
Flung to the *heedless winds.*
From all that dwell below the *skies.*
From every *stormy wind* that *blows.*
From Greenland's *icy mountains.*
Give me the *wings* of faith to rise.
Give to the *winds* thy fears.
How swift the *torrent* rolls.
I thirst, thou wounded *Lamb.*
I was a wandering *sheep.*
If, on a *quiet sea.*
It came upon the *midnight clear*
Jesus, Saviour, *pilot me.*
Lo! He comes, with *clouds.*
Lord, I hear of *showers* of blessing
My bark is *wafted* to the *strand.*
Now the *day* is over.
O God of God! O *Light* of *Light.*
O sometimes the *shadows* are dark
On the *mountain's* top appearing.
Plunged in a *gulf* of dark despair.
Saviour, like a *shepherd* lead us.
Silent *night!* Holy *night!*
Silently the *shades* of *evening*
Softly now the *light* of *day.*
Sow in the *morn* thy *seed.*
The *dawn* of God's clear Sabbath
The spacious *firmament* on high.

There is a *fountain* filled with blood.
There is a *land* of pure delight.
There's a song in the *air*.
'Tis *midnight*, and on *Olive's* brow.
Walk in the *light!* so shalt thou be.
Watchman, tell us of the *night*.
We journey through a *vale*.
We may not *climb* the heavenly steeps.
We *plow* the *fields* and scatter *seed*.
When gathering *clouds*.
When *morning* gilds the *skies*.
While *shepherds* watched their flocks by *night*.
Work, for the *night* is coming.
Zion stands with *hills* surrounded.

So, in these out-of-door days, preachers and people alike will catch a new love for the old hymns when we sing them. Breezes will blow in through the windows of our churches; bird songs will come to us; dawns, twilights, seas, waves, billows, snow-clad mountain peaks, cool canyons, tumbling streams, stars of night, cool evenings, beautiful gardens—and God will seem nearer. When we are in the out of doors, every tree, every mountain, every vale, every bird will have a spiritual meaning as we remember that these great hymn writers used Nature symbols so frequently.

Then, as we sing, we shall know what the poet meant when he wrote:

"The kiss of the sun for pardon,
The songs of the birds for mirth;
One is nearer God's heart in a garden
Than any place else on earth."

IV. Other Buttresses for This Thesis

In Dr. James Black's "The Romance of Preaching" I find such buttressing stones of quotations as the following:

> The God who uttered himself in nature has decreed that its dumb lips should have their own peculiar eloquence. There are sermons in stones. In the rocks beneath our feet lie the hoarded histories of past millenniums.

Speaking of Charles Darwin, this same writer says:

> At times there came over him with irresistible force the conviction that he had seen the Father.

Further Dr. Black says:

> A primrose in God's hand is text enough to shatter all of our shallow agnosticism and reward our honest quest for the Eternal.

Stronger even are the lines:

> The universe is itself a great Bible, with the sublimest of all intelligible themes to set forth and illustrate, and with its myriad worlds so many chapters expanding the one central and vital revelation, until by endless iteration the argument is established on which immortal souls can build unconquerable faith.

I buttressed the temple of this chapter on one side with quotations from the poets, and I end it

with the buttressing support of quotations from the great preachers themselves.

At least, even to the timid preacher it must surely have been revealed in some high and holy moment that:

"God is at the Organ:
I can hear
A mighty music
Echoing far and near.
God is at the Organ,
And the keys
Are rolling billows,
Storm-strewn moorlands, trees."

There is a certain rich overflow out of the heart of minister and the ministry which knows that Nature is God's green growing scriptures.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE BIBLE THE BASIS OF GREAT PREACHING

Out of the overflow of one's knowledge of the Bible comes great preaching.

Theodore Roosevelt, William Jennings Bryan, and Woodrow Wilson based their great political addresses and utterances in the Bible

Bryan's famous "Cross of Gold" speech, which focused the attention of the political world on him as a young man, came from the Bible.

Roosevelt once said, "If a man is not familiar with the Bible, he has suffered a loss which he had better make all haste to correct."

He based his famous "Preparedness" speech to America on Ezekiel, thirty-third chapter and sixth verse, "But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, his blood will I require at the watchman's hands."

In the famous appeal made for the Progressive Party, Roosevelt in Chicago used a Biblical figure in this phrase, "We stand at Armageddon, and we battle for the Lord."

I stood beside him when he made his famous Panama Canal speech at the Panama Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco. I shall never

forget the way he read from his manuscript and then slammed the pages down on the platform and ground as he was finished with each one, as if to say, "This word is uttered for this hour and day, and that's that!"

On that day he used his favorite text, from Micah: "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

Lincoln himself was saturated with the Bible. His very style itself was sourced in the Bible.

In speaking one day of a group of slaves chained together Lincoln said, "How true it is that 'God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb!'" He was commenting on the cheerfulness of the chained slaves.

All of Lincoln's letters, his speeches, his great Proclamation are regnant with Biblical texts, utterances, and key-thoughts.

These four great American statesmen and presidents—Lincoln, Roosevelt, Bryan, and Wilson—have, in a remarkable fashion, won the hearts of the American people. They have been impressive public speakers, each in his own way. Each saturated his public utterances with figures of speech from the Bible; each sourced his great addresses in the Bible; each from time to time actually took texts from the Bible.

Therefore, if the great statesmen of this nation

have found it effective to source their great preachments in the Bible, why not the ministry?

In Dan Crawford's "Back to the Long Grass" there is a story about the natives of Africa calling Livingstone a "God's Book Man." This is what every preacher ought to be, "A God's Book Man."

He may use Dramatic Book Sermons as one of his vehicles of preaching; he may be known from shore to shore as a Book-Preacher; but he ought also to be known not only as a Book-Preacher, but also he ought to be known as a preacher of THE Book.

I. The Bible Is an Inexhaustible Source of Texts and Thought

There is a gold mine in California which is in Grass Valley. They call it the Imperial Gold Mine. I like that name.

I visited this gold mine in 1915. They told me that they had been taking gold from that mine for more than fifty years, but that more gold had been mined from it that year than in all of its previous years put together. So is it with the Bible.

The Bible is an inexhaustible source of sermon—thought and text. It is a Diamond Field of text-nuggets. It is an inexhaustible ocean of human experience; it is an artesian well of living water flowing with eternal life from the inner fountains of God.

The alert preacher will never want for a text or for a thought if he will dip into the Bible each week. He will never want for an apt text to fit any topical

thought that he wants to present to his people if he sources his preaching in the library we call the Bible.

The Bible has never failed me. I have never opened its pages since I have been in the ministry that I have not turned to a text that has gripped my soul. One need never go outside of the Bible for preaching unless he desires. In its single texts, in its poetry and parable, in its drama and fiction, in its human interest story and its historical pageantry, in its prophecy and its preaching, it is inexhaustible.

II. The Bible Has a Universality of Appeal

Using texts from the Bible helps to get what Lorado Taft calls "the hint of eternity" back into preaching. Most of us preach with our own age in the scope of our horizons when we ought to be preaching with the ages in mind. The Bible will help to get that reach into our utterances. Dr. Fitch speaks of the "Frantic Immediacy." The Bible has the universal and the eternal in mind in its utterances and in its scope.

The Bible is frankly honest. Rupert Hughes and a few of our modern realistic writers in the school of biography bring to us George Washingtons who were pock-marked, who swore, who had affairs with women, and who were not plaster of Paris saints. These modern realists think that they have discovered something new, but the Biblical writers preceded them and foreshadowed them many centuries ago. They wrote the truth about the

Biblical characters: good and bad, harem, intrigue, hatred, murder, and pillage; weakness and strength. They wrote of Samson's love affairs, his shorn hair, and his blind eyes with as much frankness as a Rupert Hughes writes of Washington's pock-marks. This gives the Bible all the more strength as a background for great preaching—its universality, its honesty, its unwillingness to gloss over facts to make its heroes plaster of Paris saints.

Stricklan Gillilan has a simple poem which expresses this universality of the Bible in its application to human problems and its far reach:

He calls it "The Book for All Time." It appears in "Including You and Me," and I use it by special permission of the author himself:

"'There never was a trouble yet,' I've heard my mother say,
'That wasn't mentioned in this Book I study every day.
There never was a crisis in a human life, I'm sure,
But has its prototype in this—the Book that must endure.'

She doesn't say things to me now—that mother wise of mine—
At least not with the sort of voice she did. But clear and fine
I hear her admonitions just as plainly now as then
She read to me the same old things, again and yet again.

I didn't know it sank so deep—the wisdom she imparted.
It took the years—relentless years that left me heavier-hearted—
To show me how her words and voice I thought I slightly heeded
Were stored to give my later life the things it sorely needed.

And now, when in a hotel room I take the little Book
The Gideons—God bless them!—gave, I reverently look
Through page on page and find therein, to my profound surprise,
Full proof, through this great wonder book, that God's all-seeing eyes

Foresaw that day—that very day that was so new to me,
And had discoursed, through minds inspired, on all that I should be
And do, throughout the crisis that had seemed to me unique!
How marvelously, down the years, those wondrous pages speak!

And strangely, things I read in there sound different, somehow,
From ordinary printed stuff. And hence my little vow
That I, both for my mother's sake and for my own sake too,
Will search the Scriptures every day—they tell me what to do!"

And, for the same reasons—because the Scriptures are universal, honest, true, helpful in every experience of human life—might the preacher take a tip from the poet and help his people to solve their problems.

III. The Bible Source Gives the Text a Note of Authority

I am not a stickler for using a text.

I am as willing as any advanced preacher or teacher can be to abolish the text as a starting place if there is any good reason for it. I am not a slave to tradition.

But I DO know that the use of a text gives a certain note of authority to a sermon.

A few years ago there was a series of articles in a certain American magazine called "Blasting at the Rock of Ages." It was in the days of the so-called "Higher Criticism," when theological seminaries, which were attempting reverently and scientifically to get at the truth, were the center of blind hate. A literal interpretation of Biblical texts, without any attempt to find out what those texts meant to those who uttered them and to those who heard them for the first time, was running rampant. A literal interpretation of certain texts, without any reference to their setting in a chapter or a book or their connection with their day, was the accepted thing. Then there came the era of so-called "Higher Criticism" when reverent and well-trained men delved into the past to get the truth. That day has passed, and the Bible is stronger now than it ever was because of that research. Therefore it is true that even with more of a note of authority than ever a text from the Bible comes.

Jesus himself quoted from three of the great books of the Bible in his preaching: Deuteronomy, Isaiah, and the Psalms. He quoted from those books because it gave a note of authority to his preaching.

They said of him, "He spoke as one having authority." So will it he said of men of the ministry in this day or in any day that they "preach as one

having authority" if their preaching is sourced in the Book of Books.

I have not forgotten that novelists, poets, and dramatists have sourced some of their great productions in the Bible. This is true of Shakespeare, Tennyson, Milton, down to the most modern writers of this day and age. I remember one year noting that fifty books had taken their titles from the Bible.

They do this because the Bible gives a note of authority to creative work.

IV. Preaching Value of the New Translations

The new translations are effective.

Alfred Noyes, when speaking in America, said that preachers often "mumble words that would wake the dead when they read the Bible."

Such is the tendency of many of us. We are so familiar with the beautiful literature and the exquisite English of the King James Version that it is repeated by rote, just as we mumble or mouth the creeds.

It has ceased to have any meaning to us. It has died on our lips.

The use of the new translations will lift us out of this rut.

I illustrate:

In the King James Version, Revelation 22: 7 says, "Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book."

That sentence is ambiguous, it is circumlocutory. It is meandering.

The Moffatt translation reads: "Blessed is he who holds to heart the words of the prophecy of this book."

That single phrase pictures a man holding the Bible to his heart literally and figuratively. That new translation makes that sentence live anew. It illustrates what I mean by the use of the new translations.

The best book on this group of new translations is Dr. Halford Luccock's "Preaching Values in the New Translations." I cannot commend too highly the use of this book, for the sake of variety in preaching, for the sake of emphasis, for the sake of compactness and impact of a certain text which has been put into understandable modern phraseology. I want to illustrate by quoting several texts as they are translated in the new translations:

> Why do you note the splinter in your brother's eye, and fail to see the plank in your own eye? (Matt. 7: 3, Moffatt.)

> I did not come to invite the pious, but the irreligious. (Matt. 9: 13, Goodspeed.)

> Do you know that the Pharisees were *shocked* to hear you say that? (Matt. 15: 12, Goodspeed.)

> So he told his disciples to have a small boat ready; it was to prevent him being *crushed by the crowd.* (Mark. 3: 9, Moffatt.)

> We do not know where this fellow comes from. (John 9: 29, Weymouth.)

These few illustrations will serve to show the terrific impact of these ideas when they are put into modern phrases. Maybe we shall catch some of the "Lost Radiance" or "The Lost Impact" of these texts if we read and use the new translations in our preaching.

V. Jesus and Paul's Use of the Bible in Preaching

Paul and Jesus were great men to source their preaching in the authority of the Bible. We can well afford to study their methods.

Paul was not only a great preacher, but he was a great organizer, missionary, and money raiser. He had the same problems that we have. He met them in a most practical fashion.

Paul was a great hand to write letters to his people. That is a good modern method. Few preachers use the mails enough to keep in contact with their people.

Marriage anniversaries, commencements, hours of trouble in homes, personal letters such as Paul wrote—these make an unforgettable impression on people in these days. A letter to a little child makes that child a friend for life, because children seldom get letters through the mails.

Paul started his preaching with things in which people were interested. He started with a statue to the "Unknown God" in his famous Mars' Hill sermon. Paul watched the races, and wrestling

matches, and games for his illustrations and sermons. Jesus did the same thing.

When he was talking to shepherds he used figures of speech about sheep and sheepfolds; when he was talking to farmers he talked in terms of seeds and harvest and threshing floors and barren fields; when he was talking to mothers and wives he talked about bread and leaven and household duties and tasks. He talked in the language that people understood. He referred to his so-called sermons as "these sayings of mine."

In the use of the Bible Jesus often said, "It hath been said to you by them of old, but *I* say." This was his negative use of the Bible. He also had an affirmative use of quotations from the Old Testament books. His affirmation was in a sense a fulfillment of the prophecies of the Old Testament. We too must use history and not scorn the past.

It is interesting to note how Jesus used modern methods, or, rather, how some of our modern methods have the authority of Jesus back of them.

We have talked a lot about "Story Sermons," which means the use of such stories as the stories appearing in "Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush," Kipling, Poe, O. Henry, Van Dyke, and others as the background of sermons. This is a valuable medium of preaching. We find that Jesus used the Short Story Sermon in his Parables.

We have talked about "Food, Faith, and Fellowship Nights." We find as a source of authority

for this modern method that Jesus first fed people, cured their blind eyes, their deaf ears, their palsied limbs, and then preached to them. He fed them first. He told them a story. He answered the world-old cry of "Tell me a story" with his immortal "Once upon a time"—"It hath been said to you of old, but I say unto you."

Paul and Jesus were moderns. We must learn from them a new approach to people in our present-day preaching.

VI. How to Use the Bible in Preaching

Know it in the original, if possible. Know the Hebrew and the Greek.

There is no perfect substitute for this knowledge.

However, if one has not had the privilege of knowing the Bible in the original languages, there are innumerable commentaries and dictionaries for his use from which he may approximate a knowledge of what certain texts and passages mean through second-hand knowledge of specialists.

Read good books about the Bible. Every month sees such books pouring from the presses of America. There is an entire literature about Jesus and Paul and the New Testament, as there is of the Old.

I have emphasized elsewhere the modern method which I call "The Dramatic Book Sermon." I suggest that we preach Dramatic Book Sermons on the books of the Bible.

Hosea would make a great Dramatic Book Ser-

mon, just as any modern novel would. It has all and more than the modern novel. The book of Job is a great drama. The book of Ruth and the book of Solomon are great love stories. The motion picture world has already shown us what may be done with the life of Jesus in "The Kings of Kings" and with the life of Moses in "The Ten Commandments." It has also shown us in the latter play what may be done to apply these ancient precepts to modern life.

The Bible is not a book of history, not a book of science, not a book of literature, but it is a book about God and religion.

The wise preacher—whatever modern method he may use, whatever modern pulpit approach he may adopt, whatever variety he may have in his preaching "repertoire"—and it ought to be greatly varied—will do well to remember that it is strengthening to source whatever methods he may have in the Bible. The Bible gives him the note of authority, just as it gives a lawyer the note of authority when he quotes Blackstone.

Dr. Charles R. Brown in "The Art of Preaching" says:

> The sermon therefore may well grow directly out of the Scriptures.
>
> This literature is so rich in homiletic material that the Biblical preacher need never run dry.
>
> Let the texts hunt you! They will find you if you are really worth finding. You may properly go where they are. You may give them a reasonable chance to find you.

> Get your texts as right-minded young women get their husbands. It might be said in passing that young women are usually merciful enough to move along the main traveled roads where the young men are, and so the men do succeed in finding them.

> The man who would paint great pictures goes to France or to Italy that he may spend days or weeks and months in the Louvre at Paris, or in the Pitti Palace at Florence. He stays there in the presence of Rembrandt, Raphael—until his canons of taste are finely and firmly established.

These five quotations from Dr. Brown may be supplemented with one of my own personal experiences.

I have had the adventure of writing a book about Henry Ford, a certain more or less successful man in his particular field of endeavor.

During the process of securing the interviews that were necessary to write this book, I learned several things about Mr. Henry Ford. For one thing I learned where his habitat was. There are several Ford offices in and around Detroit. The most elaborate one is at the Highland Park plant. It is spacious, luxurious, and silent. It has carpet three inches thick on the floors and mahogany furniture. But Mr. Ford never goes near it. The Highland Park plant has for years been the show plant. Most interviewers try to find Mr. Ford in that office.

During the days that I was writing the book "Henry Ford—The Man and His Motives" I learned that he spent most of his time in a little dingy, bare office at Dearborn, Mich., near where

he was born. At that time it was about the most meager and disreputable looking office in the Detroit neighborhood.

Hundreds of reporters would come to Detroit and haunt the more elaborate Highland Park office. I never wasted any time going where Mr. Ford wasn't. I would have been a fool to have done that. I went where Mr. Ford was.

So, in hunting for texts for sermons, I, for one, intend to go where texts are to be found and waste little time in going where they are not to be found.

If I am hunting for gold, I am going where gold is. If I am hunting for diamonds, I am going where diamonds are found.

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